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A

LETTER

TO

THE HON. THOMAS ERSKINE.

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[PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.]



LETTER



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A  
LETTER  
TO  
THE HON. THOMAS ERSKINE;  
CONTAINING  
SOME STRICTURES  
ON HIS  
VIEW  
OF THE  
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES  
OF THE PRESENT  
WAR WITH FRANCE.

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By JOHN GIFFORD, Esq.  
AUTHOR OF A LETTER TO THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE, &c. &c.

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*L'Homme est de glace aux Verités ;  
Il est de feu pour le Mensonge.* VOLTAIRE.

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London :  
PRINTED BY J. PLYMSELL ;  
FOR T. N. LONGMAN, NO. 39, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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1797.

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SOME STRICTURES

ON HIS  
VIEW

OF THE  
CAUSES



WAR WITH FRANCE.

By JOHN GIFFORD, Esq.

AUTHOR OF A LETTER TO THE EARL OF LANDEDAR, &c. &c.

Il est de son point de honneur  
L'Honneur est de place aux Français;

LONDON:

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A  
LETTER

TO

THE HON. THOMAS ERSKINE.

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SIR,

AFTER the ample discussion which the origin of the war had undergone—after the unconfuted arguments, and the strong and unanswerable *proofs* which had been adduced by a learned and worthy Friend of mine,<sup>1</sup> as well as by myself,<sup>2</sup> in support of its justice and necessity, I conceived the question of *aggression* to be finally decided; and was, therefore, not a little surprized to see the subject revived by you, after your party had observed, except in occasional allusions to the topic in the House, a profound silence for more than two years—a silence which I was authorized to consider as a tacit acknowledgement of their inability to maintain the positions they had ad-

<sup>1</sup> John Bowles, Esq.

<sup>2</sup> In my Letter to the Earl of Lauderdale.

vanced.—When your intention was first announced to the public, through the usual medium of an advertisement, I was naturally led to conclude, that you were furnished with some new arguments hitherto unemployed—that you had discovered some new proofs hitherto unexplored; which must immediately confound your adversaries, and flash instant conviction on the public mind. Impressed with this idea, I was prepared to read my recantation, to acknowledge the force of your arguments, to admit the success of your researches, and to do homage to the superiority of your talents. On the perusal of your publication, however, which, be it remarked, I had not leisure to peruse until it had been deemed expedient to imprint “*The Ninth Edition*” in the title-page,<sup>3</sup> the surprize which I had experienced on its annunciation became considerably increased; for I

<sup>3</sup> If the number of editions through which a work passes were to be received as the test of its merit, the triumph of democracy would be complete. For most of the democratic publications have certainly had a more rapid and extensive sale, than those which have for their object, the defence of the laws, and the preservation of social order. The fact is, that an appeal to the passions of men, is, for obvious reasons, more successful than an address to their reason. Voltaire’s observation—“*L’Homme est de glace aux vérités; il est de feu pour le mensonge*”—is founded in an accurate knowledge of human nature.

Besides the *spirit of party*, ever active and indefatigable, is assiduous in promoting the circulation of the works of *Partisans*. And the numerous editions through which it rapidly hurried the production of *the Client* (Thomas Paine) may serve as an apt illustration of the nine editions of *the Advocate*, in the course of one week.

found,

found, that my utmost attention was inadequate to discover a single argument, on the causes of the war, which had not been employed before, or one solitary proof in support of the assertions you make.—I found, in short, that, amidst the most unequivocal professions of moderation and candour, supported by a style generally corresponding with the same, you had, no doubt unwarily and unintentionally, suffered your professional habits to acquire such a preponderance in your mind, as to limit your attention to *one side* of the important question which you had undertaken to discuss; and from the prevalence of the same habits it arises, that, while you expressly disclaim all idea of defending the French, all your arguments tend to justify their conduct towards this country; and, in fact, you plead the cause of our enemies, with the same zeal and energy, which you displayed in the discharge of your professional duty to Lord GEORGE GORDON and THOMAS PAINE.

I will not stop to investigate the motives which could induce you to take up the pen, after your party had suffered so long an interval to elapse since they last ventured into the field of controversy; perhaps you was encouraged by the supposition that those victorious arguments and triumphant proofs which had effectually established the superiority of their opponents had been consigned to oblivion; and that the strong impression which they had produced, had, by the natural



operation of time on the mind of man, aided and quickened by a variety of favourable and concurrent circumstances, been so far worn off as to justify the hope, that its entire removal would be a task easy of accomplishment. Be that as it may, since it is your pleasure to walk over beaten ground, I can have no objection to accompany you in the track.

There is a vast *show* of liberality in your declaration, that you “make no attack upon the *private character*” of Mr. PITT. Your forbearance on this head will, I conceive, be entitled to the same portion of praise as would be due to a man who should gravely proclaim, that he meant not to question the strength of Samson, the wisdom of Solomon, or the eloquence of Demosthenes. The meed of *prudence*, however, may safely be assigned to you; for, independently of the disgrace that would attach to the defeat which must necessarily be the consequence of such an attack, the example might be dangerous, and some members of your party might have just reason to dread its effects.

But, Sir, do you mean to contend, that the private character of individuals has no influence on their public conduct?—Are you of opinion, that a man who is just, honourable, and upright in all the transactions of private life, will not suffer the same principles to regulate his proceedings in public life?—Say, Can the same dependence  
be

be placed on a gamester and a debauchee, as on the friend of religion, morality, and virtue? Can he, who, in the management of his own personal concerns, has proved himself a prodigal and a spendthrift, be reasonably expected to display, in the direction of the national revenue, an attention to economy and prudence?—The moment that excellence of private character shall cease to have its weight in the scale of promotion, and talents *alone* be consulted in the distribution of places of high trust and importance, the destruction of the state will be near and inevitable. Virtue is her best prop—Religion her surest support; remove these grand buttresses of social order, the dissolution of the body politic must ensue, and the whole system crumble into ruins. Shall we, then, in discussing the pretensions of rival candidates for place and power, lose sight of so essential a consideration, and sacrifice the interests of the public to a spurious liberality, which Virtue disavows, and Religion rejects? Was such a line of conduct observed by the Romans in their best days? Was such the rule pursued by their best and most admired historians?—But you assert “the freedom of history” where it answers your purpose, and oppose it where it would thwart your views. When I shall have been convinced, that an appointment to an official situation operates with the force and effect of a magic wand, by producing a total change in the propensities of the heart, and the principles of the mind, I shall acknowledge the propriety of  
that

that forbearance, in which, at present, I can only descry the symptoms of a selfish policy, and the indications of a wily prudence. It is not surely a time, when the current of Immorality runs strong and impetuous, when Irreligion rears high her hideous head, and the existence of a future punishment becomes a topic of public debate, for writers to relax in their efforts to support and extend the influence of those moral and spiritual checks and restraints which constitute the cement of society, and strengthen the basis of man's present and future happiness. At such a time it becomes their peculiar duty to hold up to public indignation those degenerate members of the community—however illustrious their rank, however splendid their abilities—who offer a pernicious example to the world by their open violation of the ties of Morality, and the duties of Religion. You, Sir, profess a respect for both; and, believe me, I give the most implicit credit to your professions on this head. Indeed, I am little disposed to withhold my assent from any of your declarations respecting *yourself*. Every man is the best judge of his own motives, and of his own principles; and I will do you the justice to say, that no one has taken more pains than you have to comply with the salutary admonition—Γνωθε σεαυτον;—no man, I am convinced, has studied more closely the efficacy of *his own* powers—the importance of *his own* attainments—the extent of *his own* talents—and the splendor of *his own* accomplishments. It is a laudable study,



study, and the effects of it must be highly beneficial to—*yourself*.

As I do not stand forward as the encomiast of Mr. Pitt, but as the champion of truth, I shall take little notice of your animadversions on the character and conduct of the Minister previous to the year 1792. You acknowledge, that, on his first entrance into public life, he was a sincere and zealous advocate for a rational reform in the system of representation; and though you accuse him of a dereliction of principles, since his accession to power, few people will incline to admit the strength of that evidence which is solely confined to his refusal to join in the more extensive and dangerous projects of “The Friends of the People;” and to agitate a question of such high importance as that of a Parliamentary Reform, at a season when Europe is shaken to its center by the effects of that innovating spirit, in France, which originally professed to have nothing more for its object, than a moderate and necessary reform.—His subsequent conduct will be discussed in the consideration of the causes of the war, to which I shall proceed, after a short comment on one instance of misrepresentation, in which I am personally involved.

<sup>4</sup> The essential difference between the reformers of 1780 and those of the present day was explained, in a clear, forcible, and satisfactory manner, by the Duke of Portland and Earl Spencer, in reply to Lord Lauderdale, in a debate in the House of Lords, at the beginning of the year 1795.

Adverting to the loyal associations formed, at the close of the year 1792, for the express purpose of giving force and efficacy to the laws of the realm, you say that, in consequence of their establishment, "society was rent asunder," and "an absolute horror, even for liberty itself," became the prevailing spirit of the nation. This is a bold assertion. How a dissolution of society could be produced by a measure adopted with the sole view of preserving it from the attacks of its enemies, it is difficult to conceive. But as you do not condescend to adduce any evidence in support of your asseveration, I shall content myself with a formal and unqualified contradiction, which, as a member of the first association, instituted by men with whom I have the pleasure of living in the habits of friendship, I feel it my duty to give in this public manner. To check licentiousness is, in my apprehension, the best means of securing liberty; and that was the only check which the loyal associations ever wished to impose. You have the candour to exempt a part of the members from the imputations which must necessarily attach to them, if their objects had really been what you state them to be; and, indeed, a portion of vanity, much greater than any which *you* can be supposed to possess, would have been requisite, to inflict a censure upon nine-tenths of the nation, because *the enlightened few* who compose the Opposition did not choose to open their eyes to the danger which threatened the political existence of the country. The salutary consequences produced

duced by those affociations have been acknowledged by the general voice of *the people*; (I use the term in the *Roman* sense) and were any additional testimony requisite, the matter would be placed beyond the reach of doubt, by the extreme virulence which your party has universally displayed against their original promoters.<sup>5</sup>

Having followed you through these introductory remarks, I shall now examine the grounds of your assertions on the causes of the war. If I rightly comprehend your meaning, which, let me observe, is no easy matter, for your general positions are so obscured by subsequent modifications, qualifications, and exceptions, that you sometimes appear "to blow hot and cold" in the same breath, you maintain, that the war was produced, not by the conduct of France, but by the aggression of the Combined Powers, (in-

<sup>5</sup> The conduct of the House of Commons, on the subject of the pamphlet ascribed to Mr. Reeves, will form a curious theme for discussion to the historian of the present times. While I applaud and admire the zeal and energy displayed by the members in defence of the constitution, and in support of the rights of the popular branch of the legislature, I cannot but express my surprize that the House should have adopted a *mutilated sentence* as the basis of a criminal prosecution, retaining only that part of the sentence which contained the objectionable matter, and rejecting the other part which tended to elucidate the position, and which was absolutely necessary to explain the meaning of the author. In the course of that debate, too, there were some points advanced, from very high authority, which could neither be defended on the ground of history or of fact.



cluding England,) against that country. I deny the fact *in toto*. So that on this point we are completely at issue.

As assertion opposed to assertion must necessarily leave the reader in doubt, and as you have not thought proper to adduce any *proof* in support of your affirmation, though, by all the rules of evidence, the *onus probandi* lay upon you, I shall exhibit those reasons, and those documents, on which my opinion is founded.

You affirm, that the treaty of Pilnitz was framed for the destruction of the French constitution, and the dismemberment of the French empire.—This assertion is directly in the teeth of fact. That treaty had no such object in view. It was entered into at a time when the unhappy King of France, confined a close prisoner in his capital, was debarred, by the arts of a profligate faction, the full exercise of those rights and privileges which had been secured to him, in the most solemn manner, by the new constitution. The only wish of the Princes who signed it was, to see the person and lawful authority of Louis the Sixteenth freed from a situation which they justly considered, as the treaty expresses, “to be an object of common interest to all the Sovereigns of Europe.” For this purpose, and for this alone, they avowed their readiness to employ their forces and to act with decision. To prove the sincerity of their professions, no sooner was the  
King

King restored to a semblance of liberty—no sooner had he accepted the new constitution, than they announced that the declaration in question was not to be acted upon; “thereby furnishing “the most unequivocal proof, that their views “were entirely pacific towards France.” That the intentions of the parties who urged the treaty of Pilnitz were really such as they are here described to be, is clearly demonstrated, by their reception of ambassadors from Louis, subsequent to his acceptance of the constitution, and by the explanation which they entered into with the French Ministry at the commencement of the following year.

Whoever has paid attention to the situation of France, and to the manœuvres of the different parties by which that devoted kingdom was distracted at this period, must be convinced that the treaty of Pilnitz was not the cause of the war. The fact is, that at that time the French Government knew nothing of the contents of the treaty of Pilnitz, but by *report*. That report it was the interest of the republican party, which even then had been formed in France, under the fostering care of CONDORCET and BRISSOT, to magnify so as to render it subservient to their insidious purpose of making the people instrumental to the execution of their own treasonable projects. It became, however, necessary to impart the grounds of their complaint to the contracting parties; and what was the consequence of such communication?

cation?—Why, that the Emperor and King of Prussia expressly denied that the treaty had any such object or tendency as had been ascribed to it. But notwithstanding this denial, and notwithstanding the prohibition to the Emigrants to assemble in Germany, the faction persevered in that line of conduct which they had previously determined to pursue. It is absurd, then, to say, that the treaty of Pilnitz occasioned the war. That treaty, by the confession of the French themselves, was but little known in France, even at the end of the year 1792,<sup>6</sup> nearly nine months after the commencement of the war,<sup>7</sup> which was

<sup>6</sup> See “*Histoire Philosophique de la Revolution de France*,” Tome I.—The author of this work, speaking of the dispute between the rival clubs of the Cordeliers and the Jacobins, in the spring of 1792, says, “This great question—Ought war to be declared against the House of Austria?—was discussed in the Tribune of the mother-club. The Cordeliers were adverse to the war, because they thought it would tend to augment the credit of La Fayette. The Jacobins, on the contrary, *considered external hostilities as necessary to extend to the neighbouring States that effervescence which manifested itself in France.*—Besides, the incalculable expences of the war would supply them with innumerable means for effecting that social disorganization, in the midst of which they hoped to establish their empire.” Tom. I. p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> I have good reason to believe that the French Government never obtained a copy of the treaty of Pilnitz till the commencement of the year 1793, when one of their emissaries, then in England, and now resident at *Altona*, surreptitiously procured one, through the medium of a member of opposition; and it is highly probable that such alterations and additions were made to it, as rendered it a fit instrument for promoting the purpose which the prevailing faction of the day then had in view.

*solely*



*solely* occasioned by the determination of the *Brissotin* faction to overthrow the monarchy, and “to set fire to the four corners of Europe:”—a scheme, the accomplishment of which, in their apprehension, would be facilitated by a declaration of war. It was for this purpose that DELESSART, a moderate, sensible, and upright man, who had hitherto conducted the negotiation with the Emperor, was suddenly dismissed, and DUMOURIEZ appointed to succeed him. The negotiation immediately assumed a different complexion. The new Minister, bent on promoting the views of his party, conducted himself with pride and insolence to the Imperial Court, which, on the contrary, displayed such a degree of candour and moderation, that no unprejudiced man who has read the correspondence, can accuse it of a wish to commence hostilities against France.

This you must know to be the case, if you have read the correspondence;<sup>8</sup>—if you have not read it,

<sup>8</sup> “The deductions drawn from the correspondence of the two Ministers—(Messieurs DE MONTMORIN and DELESSART)—are corroborated by the most authentic facts. Every body now knows that, during the years 1790 and 1791, the foreign powers made no hostile preparations against France; there were no magazines, no augmentation, no movement of troops; and there was so little preparation of this kind, even in the spring of 1792, that the campaign could not be opened by the Allies before the end of August, although the declaration of war, on the part of France, was known six months before.”—*Defense de Louis Seize*, par M. MALOUE.

it, you are inexcusable in attempting to discuss a question without taking such previous steps as were indispensibly necessary to render you competent to the discussion;—and if you have read it, it was a duty incumbent upon you to show what part of it sanctioned, in your apprehension, those conclusions which, I contend, are egregiously false, and which led you to justify the conduct of the French, and to condemn and calumniate their enemies.

War, however, was insisted upon by BRISOT and VERGNIAUD, *as the only means of maintaining that constitution* which they intended it should overthrow. Their faction prevailed; and the unfortunate Monarch, though averse from the measure, as he expressly declared in the letter which he sent to the Assembly, on the third of August following, gave his sanction to the declaration of war, “in compliance with the unanimous opinion of *his Council*, and the *apparent* wishes of his people.”

“The responsibility of this war—(says MALLET DU PAN)—which has heaped more calamities on France than were produced by all the wars of the six preceding reigns, must fall upon the party of the Girondists, who provoked it—on

It is necessary to observe, that the fact of having “*provoked the war*” was alledged, by the regicides, as an instance of criminality against the King and his confidential Minister.

“the

“ the pusillanimous conduct of the Legislative  
 “ Assembly, who decreed it—on the Brissotin  
 “ Ministry, *who forced the King to consent to it.*

“ That Monarch shed tears when he signed the  
 “ anathema thus issued against the nation ; every  
 “ body must remember the deep horror displayed  
 “ in his countenance and in his voice, when he  
 “ went to announce to the Assembly *the resolution*  
 “ *of his Council.* Before he complied with the  
 “ wishes of the extraordinary Ministers by whom  
 “ he was surrounded, he made every one of them  
 “ sign his opinion, which was *contrary to his own.*  
 “ This paper was preserved by his Majesty, and,  
 “ if I am not mistaken, it is now in the possession of Mr. MORRIS.<sup>9</sup>

“ LOUIS XVI. considered this war as the tomb  
 “ of his family, of the monarchy, of France,  
 “ and of himself. In order to defeat the perfidious views of the Brissotins in forcing the  
 “ declaration of war, the King desired that the  
 “ rupture might not lose any of the characteristics of *an ordinary foreign war between power*  
 “ *and power,* and that the Allies would not think  
 “ of invading the legislative power of the nation.

“ This was the substance of the instructions  
 “ which this Monarch, so little known, so stu-

<sup>9</sup> This gentleman was Minister from the United States of America to the Court of France, at the commencement of the revolution.



“pidly appreciated, so unworthily insulted, by  
 “*foreigners as rash as they are ignorant,*<sup>1</sup> did me  
 “the honour to entrust to my care, in the month  
 “of May, 1792, in order that I might transmit  
 “them to the Emperor and the King of Prussia,  
 “(who were then at Franckfort, at the coronation  
 “of his Royal and Imperial Majesty,) and urge  
 “them to adopt them.

“If the Directory, who destroy the liberty of  
 “the press, who violate the secrecy of all letters,  
 “who prevent the communication of all know-  
 “ledge, should suffer this paper to be published  
 “in France, the nation will then learn to whom  
 “it is indebted for all the calamities which it has  
 “experienced, and will deplore the fate of that  
 “Monarch who had a right to call himself the  
 “*only friend of his people.*<sup>2</sup>”

This account is corroborated by the testimony  
 of M. DELESSART, which is to be found in a  
 letter written, from his prison at Orleans, to  
 his friend M. NECKAR.——Lamenting the  
 delay which had taken place in the publica-  
 tion of his defence, he says—“I shall lament,  
 “as long as I live, that it could not appear at  
 “the present period—in consequence of the  
 “manifestation of what has passed in foreign

<sup>1</sup> *Nosce TEIPSUM.*

<sup>2</sup> Correspondance Politique, pour servir à l'Histoire du Repub-  
 licanisme Français.

“ courts ; in consequence of the DEMONSTRATION  
 “ that they were unwilling to make war against us ;  
 “ in consequence of THE UNANSWERABLE PROOF  
 “ that it is we who have provoked them to hostilities,  
 “ who began them, and who have set Europe against  
 “ us.” The evidence of M. DELESSART, which  
 is, of itself, decisive, is further confirmed by  
 BRISSOT himself, who, soon after the declara-  
 tion of war, when exulting in the success of his  
 plan, exclaimed, “ *We made him (the King) de-*  
 “ *clare war, in order to put him to the test.*” And  
 again—“ *But for the war, the revolution of the*  
 “ *tenth of August would never have taken place ;*  
 “ *but for the war, France would never have been a*  
 “ *Republic.*”

Can any fact be more clearly and more firmly  
 established ? And yet, Sir, with this evidence  
 before you, for I submitted the greater part of it  
 to the public two years ago, and no one has yet  
 attempted to controvert or invalidate it, you can  
 join in the vulgar cry, and seek to strengthen the  
 prejudice which faction has propagated against  
 the enemies of France, by stigmatizing, as an  
 aggressive confederacy, a league that was purely  
 defensive. The only foundation you condescend  
 to exhibit of an opinion so contrary to fact, is  
 the Note of the 12th of June, 1792, presented  
 to Lord GRENVILLE by M. CHAUVELIN, in the  
 name of his insulted Sovereign, who was as I  
 have shown, at that time surrounded by the very  
 Ministers that had planned his deposition, and

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whose

whose official communications were, of course, dictated by that Council, in compliance with the unanimous opinion of which, he had, according to his own acknowledgement, been led to sanction the declaration of war, in contradiction to the sentiments of his own mind. On an opinion formed on such a basis, it would be a waste of time to bestow a comment. It will not stand the test of examination, and must instantly fall before the solid and "unanswerable proofs" which I have brought against it.

I shall now proceed to consider the validity of your arguments on the question of aggression, as it relates to *England*.

The first charge you prefer against the British Ministers, on this head, is, their refusal to interfere in the dispute between the French, and the Emperor and the King of Prussia, produced by the causes which I have already detailed. With what propriety you, who reprobate all idea of interference with foreign powers, and even contradict, in that respect, the maxims established by the best writers on the law of nations, can censure Ministers for *not* interfering, I cannot conceive; but if Ministers had interfered, they must either have reprobated the conduct of the French government, or have violated their duty; and it will scarcely be contended, that such reprobation would, in the temper by which the faction which then predominated in France was actuated, have been attended with the salutary effect of re-establishing



blishing that harmony which the prevalence of revolutionary principles had alone interrupted. To assert, that this refusal indicated a disposition hostile to France, is to assume a fact, contradicted by the testimony of the French rulers themselves, as well as by your own acknowledgements. You admit, (p. 44,) that until the 15th of December, 1792, the Government of this country had “ continued to express *the most pacific dispositions*,” though in the same breath you tell us, that “ we shall find them *uniformly and scrupulously observant of the most novel punctilios*, which could furnish the smallest pretence for *repelling peace*, but overleaping every rule hitherto adopted by regular governments in seeking a justification for war.” On these topics, unfortunately, even the French Executive Council of that day, with all their inveteracy against England, and with all their gratitude to you and your associates—as expressed in the paper I am about to quote—differed from you essentially. In BRISSOT’S report, from the Committee of General Defence to the National Convention, on the disposition of the British Government towards France, delivered on the 12th of January, 1793, adverting to the refusal of our Ministers to interfere in the disputes on the Continent, the reporter observes, “ Interrest engaged the Ministry to observe an exact neutrality in the war, which broke out between France, Austria, and Prussia. From this conduct they reaped a double advantage; the nation enriched herself in the midst of those

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“ combats

“combats of which she was a simple spectator;  
 “and the present Administration was consolidated  
 “by the flourishing state of commerce, and the  
 “stability of peace. Actuated by these motives,  
 “the Cabinet of St. James repeatedly declared  
 “their firm intention to observe the most scrupulous  
 “neutrality towards France; and, in fact,  
 “they did observe it until the *immortal day* of the  
 “tenth of August.”——Again——“Such was the  
 “disposition of the British Cabinet, towards the  
 “end of *November*, that every difficulty appeared  
 “to be surmounted, and Lord GRENVILLE began  
 “to acknowledge the Government of France,  
 “which he had, at first, entitled the *Government*  
 “of *Paris*. Some scruples were, indeed, suggested  
 “as to the character of our agent, and the  
 “authority of the parties; *but the British Ministers*  
 “*courted and gave explanations*. One only  
 “difficulty seemed to impede the projects of the  
 “*negotiators*. The Executive Council of France  
 “wished to negotiate through the medium of  
 “a regular Ambassador, while the British Ministry  
 “observed that the negotiation might be  
 “conducted by a secret agent; and they did not  
 “even firmly insist on this point of etiquette, if  
 “we may judge by some expressions which fell  
 “from Lord Grenville, who assured our Ambassador,  
 “that *the King of England would never be*  
 “*stopped by forms*, when the object of negotiation  
 “was to obtain declarations that might be satisfactory  
 “and advantageous to both parties.—  
 “PITT, on his part, at the beginning of *December*,  
 “testified



“ testified the strongest desire to avoid a war, and  
 “ to procure from the French Ministry the proof of a  
 “ similar disposition; and he regretted, that the  
 “ interruption of the correspondence between the  
 “ two Cabinets should have produced any mis-  
 “ understanding.”

Here is a direct contradiction of your leading assertions with respect to the conduct of Ministers; first, as to their efforts to foment the dispute between the Emperor and France, and their pretended “ incitement and encouragement to the  
 “ Princes of Europe, to invade that country, and  
 “ to dissolve her establishment,”—which you assert as a fact, and as positively as if it were true; secondly, as to their own hostile views against France; and thirdly, as to their rigid observance of the most novel punctilios for the purpose of repelling peace. The very reverse of this appears to have been the real state of the case, even from the evidence of a vigilant enemy, who had carefully collected every possible ground of complaint, in order to render the war palatable to the people of France.

In the same perverse spirit of misrepresentation or ignorance, and with equal boldness, you assert, that France, previous to the 28th of January, 1793, “ was undoubtedly solicitous for peace.” No man who has attended to the political system of the republican Cabinet of Paris, at this period, can doubt that the French Government were  
 anxious



anxious to lull us into a *false security*, in order that they might, without molestation, pursue the vast plans of aggrandizement which, by the diffusion of their principles, as well as by the force of their arms, they hoped to accomplish. But that they were disposed to sacrifice to peace any one of those objects, without the complete dereliction of which the preservation of peace was impracticable, is a position that even your ingenuity and sophistry must prove inadequate to establish.

If you had paid that attention to your subject which could alone enable you to discuss it with propriety, you would have known, that so little did the rulers of France expect a continuance of peace, that, so early as the month of October, 1792, they caused a law to be passed by the Convention, for the equipment of a powerful fleet, in consequence of the report of the Committee of General Defence—in which, a war with the maritime powers was represented as highly probable. It cannot be contended, that this expectation of war was founded on the hostile dispositions of the British Court, because I have already shown, that, even to the month of December, it had, by their own confession, evinced the strongest anxiety for the preservation of peace. Besides, we have the authority of BRISSOT for affirming that, at this very time, “the determination was made to brave  
“all Europe.”

But, by way of proving your general position,  
you

you assert, that before the 28th of January, 1793, France “ had disavowed conquest and aggrandizement,” had “ offered to respect the neutrality of Holland, and solemnly disavowed every act or intention to disturb the Government of Great Britain.” However disposed *you* may be to give implicit credit to all the declarations of these *virtuous* republicans, you must at least permit *me* to demonstrate the difference between their professions and their practice. And this will necessarily lead me to a brief consideration of the famous, or rather *infamous*, decree of the 19th of November, 1792, which you have most injudiciously adduced in support of your charge against his Majesty’s Ministers.

The sincerity of the disavowal of all intention to disturb the government of foreign States, is proved, beyond the possibility of doubt, by the avowed “ wish of all enlightened republicans, “ *before the tenth of August,*” to establish liberty not only in France, but in “ *all Europe;*” and by the means which they meant to adopt for the accomplishment of their project—“ by exciting “ the governed against the governors, in exhibiting to the people the advantages of such insurrections.” Yet, notwithstanding this honest avowal, you will probably agree with LE BRUN, whose assertion will better tend to promote the manifest object of your publication, that “ it

<sup>3</sup> BRISSOT’S Address to his Constituents, p. 74.

“ would

“ would be wronging the National Convention to charge them *with the project of protecting insurrections.*” Indeed, Sir, the mode of reasoning you have chosen to adopt is one which it might, perhaps, be allowable to employ in the Court of King’s Bench, in support of a client accused of high treason, but which, most certainly, very ill becomes a man who has the honour to represent the people of Great Britain.

The offer of respecting the neutrality of Holland, ought undoubtedly to have received the greatest degree of attention, and the most implicit belief of its sincerity, after the *disinterested* sentiments avowed on that subject by the members of the French Government. Alluding to those sentiments, at a subsequent period, the *patriotic* and *enlightened* ROBESPIERRE justly lamented that their liberal designs upon *Holland* had not been put in execution. “ If (said he) we had invaded *Holland*, the Government of England had been undone, and the revolution of Europe secured.” MAULDE-HOSDAN, who, before the revolution, filled the office of Minister Plenipotentiary, from France, at the Hague, thus delivered *his* sentiments, on the subject of Holland, in a speech to the Convention, (previous to M. CHAUVELIN’s offer to respect her neutrality,) which received the unanimous approbation of that *august* assembly. “ England and Prussia know very well, that France has the greatest interest to substitute a popular and representative government, for the  
“ aristo-



“ aristocratical and degenerate one that actually  
 “ exists in Holland; *that with the forces of that*  
 “ *country France would irrecoverably destroy the*  
 “ *trade of England;*” (M. MAULDE-HOSDAN  
 might be a good *patriot*, but he was evidently  
 no *prophet*;) “ and, by means of her navy, soon  
 “ command the Baltic; that all which would be  
 “ wanting would be a renewal, in that part of the  
 “ north, of an alliance of situation then become  
 “ necessary; and that, an intimate union between  
 “ France and Holland being once formed, *the*  
 “ *supremacy of the English trade, both in the East*  
 “ *and West Indies, would rapidly disappear;* while  
 “ Prussia, on her side, would, sooner or later, ir-  
 “ recoverably lose all her possessions in West-  
 “ phalia! But why has she exposed herself to  
 “ the danger of losing them? *Her impolitic alli-*  
 “ *ance with Austria* is the Saturn of the fable  
 “ which devours every thing without producing  
 “ any thing.”

The designs of France upon Holland are also  
 acknowledged by PUBLICOLA CHAUSSARD, the  
 National Commissary, sent by the Executive  
 Council, at the close of the year 1792, to pro-

\* His Prussian Majesty seems to have taken the hint here sug-  
 gested by this sagacious republican; and, with equal sagacity, to  
 have preferred the *chance* of securing his possessions in Westphalia  
 by facilitating the conquest of the Netherlands, to the *certainly* of  
 preserving them by contributing his efforts to confine the French  
 within their antient limits.—History will no doubt do *justice* to  
 this *upright* Monarch.

mote a revolution in the Netherlands.—“ The  
 “ enemies of France, and England in particular”—  
 (says this apostle of revolutionary freedom)—  
 “ cherish the system of excluding her from rank-  
 “ ing as a maritime power. Thence proceeded  
 “ the error in which the public opinion was kept,  
 “ respecting our operations in Flanders, *and those*  
 “ *which we had projected against Holland.*”—These  
 projects were certainly very consistent with the  
 offer of *neutrality*!

It now remains to show what reason there was  
 to give credit to the renunciation, by the French  
 Government, of conquest and aggrandizement.

The *revolution of Europe* might, you may say,  
 have been secured, without any accession of ter-  
 ritory to the French; these *philanthropic* and *phi-*  
*losophic* reformers would have been content to  
 emancipate the neighbouring States from the  
 shackles of princely authority, to establish among  
 them the rights of man, and the liberal principles  
 of liberty and equality,<sup>5</sup> and have remained satis-  
 fied, with the delightful contemplation of their  
 own works, and with the quiet possession of their

<sup>5</sup> I give you credit for, at least, one discovery of your own,  
*viz.*—that “ a spirit of liberty and *equality* pervaded even the  
 “ *vassalage* of the feudal conquerors of Europe.”—This is perfectly  
 novel, and leads one to deplore that you were not a member of the  
 Constituent Assembly which destroyed, *en masse*, all feudal rights  
 as a necessary measure, preparatory to the establishment of liberty  
 and equality.

own domains ! The impresson of this belief would, indeed, square very well with the object of your arguments ; but, unfortunately for you, there are some declarations on record which are calculated to fix an impresson, of a different nature, on the minds of all rational men. BRISSOT, in his Address to his Constituents, asserts, that he had formed *plans*, by the accomplishment of which “ Liberty might have found no other boundaries than those of the world.” How these plans were to affect the individual interest of *France*, may be ascertained by his declaration that the French “ ought to acknowledge no other barrier than the Rhine.” The same project is avowed by CHAUSSARD, the official agent of government, who was not only in full possession of all their views, but was actually invested with all their powers.—“ It was of consequence to “ France”—(says CHAUSSARD, in his Memoirs,)—“ that she should repossess herself on one side of “ the barrier of the Rhine, and, on the other, “ command the Scheldt and the Meuse, by enclosing them within her boundaries ; thus protecting and enlarging the sources of the national wealth ; in a word, that she should “ resume the ancient division of her territory, “ which heretofore extended northern Gaul to “ these limits: that she should bring back into “ the bosom of a large family, nations that, during a long space of time, had formed a part “ of it.



“ No doubt it was the interest of France, to  
 “ raise, and to secure *by conquest*, the trade of the  
 “ Belgic Provinces, so cramped by that of Hol-  
 “ land, and thence to alarm, to threaten the  
 “ United Provinces, to place our assignats on the  
 “ very desks of their counting-houses, *there to*  
 “ *ruin the Bank of England*;<sup>6</sup> and, in short, to  
 “ complete the revolution of the money-system.  
 “ It was the interest of France to monopolize,  
 “ as it were, those vast implements of trade,  
 “ those manufactures of national prosperity. It  
 “ was the interest of France to weaken her mor-  
 “ tal enemy, to cramp his efforts, *to aggrandize*  
 “ *herself* with his spoils; in brief, to mutilate  
 “ the Colossus of Austria, by rending from him  
 “ these fertile countries, for obtaining and secur-  
 “ ing the possession of which, he has for ages been  
 “ lavish of gold, of blood, and of intrigues.

“ It was the interest of France *to raise herself*  
 “ *to the rank of a first-rate power* in Europe: thus  
 “ covering with a shield the second-rate powers,  
 “ and protecting them against the boundless am-  
 “ bition of the northern empires.”

<sup>6</sup> There are persons, evidently in the interest, if not in the *pay*, of the French, busily employed in *England, at this time*, in a daring attempt to accomplish this very scheme, by seeking to make the populace believe, that the high price of provisions is entirely owing to the circulation of Bank Notes, and to what they are pleased to call “The Iniquity of Banking.”—A proceeding so unprincipled and flagitious in itself, and so dangerous in its consequences to a commercial country, should surely not be suffered to pass unnoticed.

If these declarations of an authorized Envoy of the French Government, employed for the express purpose of accomplishing their designs in a neighbouring State, do not afford a complete proof of their views of *conquest and aggrandizement*, and consequently of the insincerity of their disavowal of such views, I am at a loss to know what, in your apprehension, constitutes such proof.

As you have thought proper to quote the decree of the nineteenth of November, I am compelled to make some observations on the subject, although I have, on a former occasion, amply explained the intent, nature, and application of the same. To repeat arguments which have never been answered, is a task extremely irksome to me; but if you and your party will persist in urging objections which have been repeatedly confuted, no alternative is left to your opponents. To read nothing which tends to thwart your views, or to contradict your opinions, may be the best means of avoiding mortification, and of nursing vanity; but if you were, on political points, to deviate, in this respect, from your legal practice, and condescend to examine the arguments *on both sides* of the question, you would save yourself, the public, and your adversaries, no inconsiderable degree of trouble. You have, however, chosen your path, and I must follow you in it.

The

The purpose for which you notice the decree in question, is to show that the explanation offered by CHAUVELIN was such as ought, at least, to have so far satisfied Ministers as to induce them to enter into a farther negociation. If then I can prove, that the explanation offered was not only unsatisfactory, in all respects, but that the professions of the French Government were at direct variance with their practice, at this very time, and that their assertions were only framed for the express purpose of deception, your argument, of course, must fall to the ground.

The explanations on which you rely are those which were contained in the Note of the French Minister, delivered to Lord GRENVILLE by M. CHAUVELIN, in the month of January, 1793. The grand object of them was to enforce the three positions which I have already overturned. But in order to show the flagitious conduct of the said Executive Council in a stronger point of view, it will be necessary to subjoin some additional remarks.

In the interval between the 19th of November, when the decree was passed, and the time when the explanation of it was offered to the British Minister, another decree was enacted by the French Convention, (on the 15th of December, 1792,) which, far from removing any one ground of complaint preferred by our Court against the provisions of the former law, contained explanations;



tions, if possible, still more incompatible with the independence of neighbouring States. And, to prevent the possibility of misapprehension on the subject, the Executive Council sent the decree to their Commissaries in the Netherlands, accompanied by specific instructions, explanatory of its spirit and principles, and describing the practical application of each particular article. Fortunately, one of the Commissaries committed these instructions to the press, and they prove, incontestably, the truth of my assertions, and the falsehood of the explanations offered by the Council. As these documents were so amply discussed and so well understood at the time, I shall be very brief in my extracts.

In the *explanation* it is averred, that "*France will respect other Governments.*" In their preliminary observations to their Commissaries, the Council remark, that "*Although the art of organizing societies be still in its infancy, the art of organizing revolutions is farther advanced.*" And these instructions fix the means of revolutionizing Belgium.

Only eight days before the decree of the 19th of November was passed, the Convention bestowed unanimous applause on the following speech of one NARKERTON, a Dutch patriot, and even ordered honourable mention to be made of it in their Bulletin, or Journals of the House.—"My countrymen, the Batavians, burn with a desire to be—  
" come

“ come Frenchmen, and the Stadtholder trembles.  
 “ They expect liberty from you. French Generals! come and break the chains of these unhappy republicans, still oppressed by tyrants.”  
 —Such was the *respect* paid, by the French legislature, to the Government of Holland; and the respect which they paid to that of England had been sufficiently demonstrated by the answer of the Abbé Gregoire, in his official capacity of President of the Convention, to the address of certain *British patriots*, who, in your opinion, were actuated by an “ honest but irregular zeal,” and by “ a just indignation.” The address congratulated the French on the violation of their solemn oaths, by the abolition of monarchy, and the answer expressed the hope of the President soon to congratulate the addressers “ *on the establishment of a National Convention in England,*” and, consequently, on the destruction of the British constitution.

In the *explanation* it is stated, that France “ *will not impose laws upon any one.*” In the decree of the 15th of December it is declared, “ *that she will treat as enemies the people who, refusing or renouncing liberty and equality, are desirous of preserving, recalling, or entering into an accommodation with, their Prince and privileged Casts.*” And the Council observe that, by this decree, “ The French nation considers as her enemies even a whole people, if they reject liberty and equality, and express a wish to treat with a  
 “ Prince



"Prince and privileged Casts." And they add, that this declaration is not a *vain threat*, but "the *direct consequence* of all the principles on which *that just and salutary law* is founded."

The explanation farther states, "*we have said, and we desire to repeat it, that the decree of the 19th of November could not have any application, unless to the single case in which the general will of the nation, clearly and unequivocally expressed, should call the French nation to its assistance and fraternity.*" The instructions of the Council, on the contrary, direct its application to a country, in which all the inhabitants reject the plans and principles of the French republic; and their own Commissary in the Netherlands, in his account of his operations *in pursuance of their instructions*, expressly represents a majority of the provisional administration of that country, which had been chosen by *the people*, as hostile to the decree of the Convention; and explains the means which, in consequence of this event, he had taken, to accomplish, what *you* seem anxious to accomplish in *England*—"to raise up the *minority*, and to destroy the ascendancy of an *antipatriotic majority.*"—The explanation disclaims all views of annexing Belgium to France; but all the efforts of the official agents of the Council were avowedly directed to secure the sovereignty of that country to the republic.<sup>7</sup>

As

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the very circumstance which gave rise to the decree

F

gives



As you lay a particular stress on the disavowal of the Executive Council, of all intention to *annex Belgium to France*, and make it a leading feature of your argument, to prove the pacific disposition of the republic, it becomes necessary to enter more at large upon the subject;—and as it is my invariable wish, in discussions of this nature, to produce conviction more by the strength of my proofs than by the tenor of my opinions, I shall extract an account of the conduct of the French to the inhabitants of Belgium, from one of their own historians, a French *Citizen*, whose authority you will scarcely be disposed to question.

gives the lie direct to the assertion contained in the *explanation*. RHUL, a member of the Convention, prefaced his motion for the decree, on the 19th of November, by observing, that the bailiwick of Darmstadt, belonging to the Duke of Deux-Ponts, (who, be it observed, had acknowledged the French republic, and was at peace with France,) had displayed the tri-coloured cockade, and planted the tree of liberty, and that the Duke was advancing with a body of troops, with a view to seize and imprison the Syndics. RHUL then moved, that the Assembly should declare “Those people who wish to fraternize with us, are under the protection of the French Republic.” The spirit of this motion was adopted, and the decree in question was passed in consequence of this event; and, that its application might not be mistaken, it was *acted upon* without delay—a French army entered the territory of the unfortunate Duke of Deux-Ponts, who with difficulty escaped from his palace in the night, and fled for refuge to the opposite bank of the Rhine.

See “An Historical Essay on the Ambition and Conquests of France,” published by DEBRET, in which this fact is placed, with many others, in a very proper point of view.

“The

“ The French Generals, when they penetrated  
 “ into Belgium, after the battle of Gemmappes,  
 “ had published, with the consent and approba-  
 “ tion of the National Convention, a procla-  
 “ mation, in which they announced to the Bel-  
 “ gians, that the armies of the republic entered  
 “ their territories as friends and brothers; that  
 “ they gave them a *full and perfect liberty*; that  
 “ *they should choose whatever form of government*  
 “ *they liked best, without the smallest restraint being*  
 “ *imposed on their inclinations, in any manner what-*  
 “ *ever.*

“ All the proclamations published by the Jaco-  
 “ bins,<sup>8</sup> (in Belgium,) exalted the social virtues,  
 “ and talked of nothing but their love of the  
 “ human race. They declared, that the French,  
 “ in a state of freedom, were the enemies of  
 “ Kings, but they proclaimed, at the same time,  
 “ the greatest respect for the will of the people.  
 “ In vain did the French Emigrants, who had  
 “ retired in great numbers to that country, assure  
 “ the inhabitants that anarchy was the only system  
 “ of the Jacobins, who concealed, under specious  
 “ but false professions, the perfidy of their designs;  
 “ and that, after subverting the constitution of  
 “ their own country, they would carry the flames  
 “ of discord into the neighbouring States. The  
 “ candour of these benevolent monitors was  
 “ suspected; the Belgians considered them as

<sup>8</sup> All the members of the Government were Jacobins.

“ too much interested in the opposite cause, to  
 “ give a true representation of the events that were  
 “ passing in France.

“ The principles of disinterestedness pro-  
 “ claimed by the National Convention, the solemn  
 “ promise to make no conquests, and all the  
 “ *pompous expressions*, consecrated by the new  
 “ civic religion, were repeated by DUMOURIEZ;  
 “ the people were persuaded that his conduct  
 “ would correspond with his professions, and that,  
 “ under the powerful protection of France, the  
 “ Belgians, assembled in convention, would pre-  
 “ serve such of their customs as they chose to  
 “ retain, and would make such alterations as  
 “ should appear to be advantageous to themselves,  
 “ without being obliged to adopt the system of  
 “ government which prevailed in France.

“ But CAMBON entertained views of a very  
 “ different nature; and *the proclamations which*  
 “ *had been published were nothing more than snares*  
 “ *to entrap the Belgians.* Scarcely were the  
 “ French in possession of all the fortified towns,  
 “ and of all the arms in Belgium, than this le-  
 “ gislator, and Minister of Finance, openly  
 “ proclaimed his design of seeking an odious and  
 “ vain resource in the spoliation of a friendly  
 “ country.

“ By a decree, which passed on the 15th of  
 “ December, all existing authorities in Brabant  
 “ and



“ and Flanders were suppressed; the establish-  
 “ ment of a provisional government, on the  
 “ model of the French government, was or-  
 “ dained; all public property, moveable and im-  
 “ moveable, as well as the property of the Clergy,  
 “ of the Princes, and of the Lay-Communities,  
 “ was sequestered; the imposts, *tythes*, and feu-  
 “ dal rights, were suppressed; and the Generals  
 “ were ordered to enforce the execution of this  
 “ law, which, at least, was ill-timed, and exe-  
 “ cuted without considering whether or not the  
 “ Belgians were prepared for a change at once so  
 “ general and so prompt. It is true, that the  
 “ execution of *a part* of these regulations were  
 “ to cease so soon as the Belgians should have a  
 “ national representation; *but a thousand means*  
 “ *were devised to prevent the meeting of this re-*  
 “ *generating Congress.*

“ Four Commissaries, members of the National  
 “ Convention, CAMUS, GOSSUIN, DANTON,  
 “ and LACROIX, were ordered to repair to Brux-  
 “ elles, for the purpose of obviating any local  
 “ difficulties which might obstruct the execution  
 “ of the decree; these men entrusted the *details* of  
 “ this operation to the regulating Commissary,  
 “ RONSIN, who, employed soldiers and clerks,  
 “ all of them Jacobins, to act as bailiffs; and  
 “ they took care to steal one half of the move-  
 “ able effects on which they were ordered to put  
 “ the national seals.

“ CAMBON,

“ CAMBON, who governed the finances with an  
 “ absolute authority, was no otherwise qualified  
 “ for this office, in times of extraordinary diffi-  
 “ culty, than as he was destitute of every senti-  
 “ ment of probity and honour. Without any  
 “ experience in public affairs, without any know-  
 “ ledge of mankind, he displayed a degree of  
 “ obstinacy and despotism in the removal of dif-  
 “ ficulties that excited the astonishment of men  
 “ of experience and ability. When it was repre-  
 “ sented to him that *the Belgians entertained poli-*  
 “ *tical ideas totally different from those of the*  
 “ *French*, and that the time for destroying or  
 “ subduing their *prejudices* was not come; that  
 “ the effects of driving them to despair were to  
 “ be dreaded; that they might secretly call in  
 “ the Austrians to their aid, and, when they  
 “ found themselves supported, take up arms in  
 “ every part of the country, massacre the garri-  
 “ sons, composed of weak and inexperienced  
 “ battalions, and entirely ruin the army; when  
 “ to these remonstrances it was added, that, in-  
 “ stead of killing the hen that laid golden eggs,  
 “ it would be better by loans, which would give  
 “ the Belgians an eventual interest in our suc-  
 “ cesses, draw out a part of the treasures that  
 “ were buried in Belgium, or procure the same  
 “ resource by proposing to the opulent merchants  
 “ at Antwerp, Bruxelles, and Ghent, to employ  
 “ their capitals in contracting for the supply of  
 “ the armies; CAMBON acknowledged the justice  
 “ of these reflections, but pretended, that his  
 “ plan

“ plan went more directly to the object of sup-  
 “ plying the *deficit* in the finances;—this plan  
 “ was to seize all the specie in Belgium, and all  
 “ the plate belonging to the churches, or to any  
 “ public bodies. The French financier ingenu-  
 “ ously avowed, that such conduct was unjust;  
 “ but, according to him, *state policy sanctioned*  
 “ *every kind of injustice*. Besides, observed  
 “ CAMBON, when the Belgians, stripped of all  
 “ their gold and silver, shall be as poor as the  
 “ French, they will naturally be led to partake of  
 “ their fate, like the *Liegeois*, who threw them-  
 “ selves into the arms of France, *because they*  
 “ *were miserable and in debt*, and will become  
 “ members of the French republic, *in the hope of*  
 “ *making conquests in their turn upon their own fron-*  
 “ *tiers, and of taking from others what they have*  
 “ *lost themselves*.

“ CAMBON also placed a great reliance on what  
 “ he called THE PEOPLE; *and by that term he did*  
 “ *not mean the assemblage of all the citizens of a*  
 “ *country, but that croud of lazy, idle vagabonds,*  
 “ *who infest all great towns, and who are easily*  
 “ *rendered the blind instruments of those who wish to*  
 “ *disturb the public peace.*” And, lastly, he insisted,

that

9 Here is a candid and true definition of the word PEOPLE, in  
 its modern *patriotic*, or *revolutionary*, sense; and as employed by  
 a distinguished member of the French Government, at the very  
 time when the negotiation between that Government and the British  
 Ministry was carrying on. It affords a key to the principles of  
 that desperate faction which overthrew monarchy in France, and  
 may



" that nothing could be more fortunate for France  
 " since the revolution, THAN TO DISORGANIZE  
 " THE NEIGHBOURING NATIONS, AND TO  
 " THROW THEM INTO SUCH A STATE OF ANAR-  
 " CHY, THAT THEY SHOULD BE DISABLED FROM  
 " RAISING UP ANY OBSTACLE TO THE NEW  
 " ORDER OF THINGS WHICH IT WAS RESOLVED  
 " TO INTRODUCE IN FRANCE.

" These principles, barbarous and antisocial as  
 " they were in themselves, were executed with a  
 " degree of indecency which greatly aggravated  
 " their *Machiavelism*. A hungry horde of Jaco-  
 " bins, of both sects, was dispatched into Bel-  
 " gium, with the most ample powers, some in  
 " the capacity of Commissaries of the Executive  
 " Power ;<sup>1</sup> others as delegates from the Commune

may serve as the basis of a glossary for all the popular manifestoes  
 of the revolution. It shows that the pompous expressions so la-  
 vishly used, of "Rights of the People,"—"Liberties of the  
 "People,"—"Majesty of the People,"—"Sovereignty of the  
 "People,"—and "Friends of the People,"—mean nothing  
 more than the—"Rights of the Mob,"—"The Liberties of the Mob,"  
 —"The Majesty of the Mob,"—"The Sovereignty of the Mob,"—  
 and "The Friends of the Mob." In short, it proves, what has  
 often been asserted by public writers, that the Government of  
 France, was, at this period at least, a Mob Government.

It is of the utmost consequence, in reading the accounts of the  
 public transactions of these eventful times, to keep this definition  
 constantly in the mind ; and the friends to social order in every  
 country will do well to appreciate the patriotic professions of the  
 modern apostles of liberty by a standard supplied by one of the  
 first and most strenuous *Friends of the people*.

<sup>1</sup> PUBLICOLA CHAUSSARD was one of these.

“ of Paris, who pretended to exercise sovereign  
 “ power; and a third description who, without  
 “ having a particular mission, were entrusted, by  
 “ the *mother-society*, with the task of enlighten-  
 “ ing the people, and forming the public mind,  
 “ that is to say, of propagating the Jacobinical  
 “ system. These Proconsuls, who, dressed in  
 “ the most disgusting manner, lived at a most  
 “ scandalous expence, sequestrated the gold and  
 “ silver belonging to the churches and to persons  
 “ of property, whose moveables they either ap-  
 “ propriated to their own use, or sold at a very  
 “ low rate, according to circumstances; sup-  
 “ pressed the imposts, *in order to flatter the poor*;  
 “ broke the magistrates; created popular assem-  
 “ blies, *affiliated* with the Jacobins at Paris; and,  
 “ in short, exercised an arbitrary power, with the  
 “ assistance of a part of the National Guards, who  
 “ obeyed them in preference to their officers.

“ The Belgians, taught from their infancy to  
 “ pay a religious respect to the objects of their  
 “ worship, saw, with a degree of surprize min-  
 “ gled with the deepest indignation, the acts of  
 “ irreverence committed by the French in  
 “ churches, and on things which Religion had  
 “ consecrated in the most special manner; the  
 “ Bishops and Priests, despoiled of their property  
 “ and threatened with the loss of liberty, and  
 “ probably of life, had fled. Persons of opu-  
 “ lence buried their gold and silver; the mer-  
 “ chants put a stop to all their speculations; the

“ circulation of specie was interrupted ; mistrust  
 “ pervaded every mind ; and a variety of symp-  
 “ toms announced a near explosion.

“ The Jacobins, however, without seeming to  
 “ pay attention to the general disposition of the  
 “ public mind, had formed the plan of extorting,<sup>1</sup>  
 “ from each particular canton, a declaration of  
 “ its wish for *the union of Belgium with the French*  
 “ *republic*. The people were accordingly assem-  
 “ bled in the churches, without any regular  
 “ form. There the members of the French and  
 “ Belgic clubs read the act of accession, which,  
 “ very often, nobody understood ; and *the persons*  
 “ *present signed it, some trembling, and others*  
 “ *bought over or seduced*. These papers were  
 “ then printed, and sent to the National Assembly  
 “ of France, as containing *the free and unanimous*  
 “ *wish of the Belgians*. The Parisians, deceived  
 “ by appearances, considered Belgium as an in-  
 “ exhaustible mine which was destined to give  
 “ solidity to the assignats, when the unfortunate  
 “ inhabitants of these provinces, which were for-  
 “ merly so happy and so flourishing, called in  
 “ the Imperialists by their wishes, and by secret  
 “ manœuvres.

“ The same conduct was observed by the Jaco-

<sup>1</sup> And yet these were the men who had assured Lord GRENVILLE that *France would respect the independence of the Belgians, even in their errors* ; and whose word, you contend the Minister ought to have taken.

“ bins



“ bins<sup>2</sup> at Mentz, and at the other conquered  
 “ towns on the Rhine, in the country of Poren-  
 “ trui; in Savoy; and in the county of Nice.—  
 “ Important as these operations were, they made  
 “ but a feeble impresson on the minds of the people  
 “ in France, where the general attention was, at  
 “ that time, absorbed, by the trial of Louis XVI.  
 “ then pending in the National Convention.’”

I have already observed, that PUBLICOLA CHAUSSARD was one of the Commissaries appointed by the Executive Council for carrying into effect this curious plan for “ *consolidating the liberties of the Belgians.*” That he was invested with unbounded powers, as stated by the historian, will appear from his official appointment given in the margin;<sup>4</sup> and he exercised those powers

<sup>2</sup> It is essential to recollect, that all the members of the French Government are included in this denomination.

<sup>3</sup> Histoire Philosophique de la Revolution de France—Par Antoine Fantin-Desodoards, Citoyen Français. Tom. I. p. 209. et suiv.

<sup>4</sup> “ In the name of the French republic.

“ In virtue of the law of the 15th of August last, which entrusts  
 “ to the Executive Council all the functions of the executive power,  
 “ and of the decree of the National Convention of the 21st of Sep-  
 “ tember following, by which those public authorities are confirmed  
 “ which were in a state of activity at the last epoch;—We, the  
 “ citizens forming the Provisional Executive Council of the republic,  
 “ have made choice of citizen PUBLICOLA CHAUSSARD, and have  
 “ appointed him a National Commissary, and *invested him with*  
 “ *all our powers*, in order that he may repair to Bruxelles without  
 “ delay, to enforce, as well in that city as in the neighbouring  
 “ district which will be described to him, the execution of the  
 “ decrees of the National Convention of the 15th, 17th, and 22d

powers in a manner that was perfectly conformable to the wishes of his employers. After the most strenuous efforts to prepare the minds of the people, by the employment of ambulatory patriots to harangue the populace, patriotic ballad-singers, and similar instruments of revolt, for the favourite plan of annexing Belgium to France, the French Commissaries held a meeting at Bruxelles, where *they*, as might be supposed, unanimously resolved, that an union of the two countries ought to be promoted by every practicable means, or, as one of them expressed himself, by the exercise "of a revolutionary power."—The opinion of CHAUSSARD—to whom we are indebted for the knowledge of these extraordinary facts—is too curious to be omitted. "OUGHT BELGIUM TO BE ANNEXED TO FRANCE?—Expressing only the opinion of an individual,

"of December, in the present year, concerning the proclamation of the liberty and sovereignty of the people of all the countries into which the French republic has carried or may hereafter carry her arms.

"We pray and require all persons to whom the said Commissary may apply, to give him such aid and assistance as he may deem expedient and necessary for fulfilling the object of his mission, *conformably to the will of the republic*. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and the seal of the republic.

"Done at Paris, the 31st of the month of December, 1792, in the first year of the French republic.

"The citizens forming the Provisional Executive Council of the republic,

"ROLAND, GARAT, CLAVIERE, LE BRUN, PACHE, MONGE.

"By the Provisional Executive Council,

"GROUVELLE."

"and

“ and embracing in my mind *the secret object*  
 “ *which it is our duty to accomplish*, I vote FOR  
 “ THE ANNEXATION OF BELGIUM TO FRANCE,  
 “ being influenced by an attention to the interests  
 “ of both nations; and this interest having been  
 “ proved to me, I vote for the employment of all  
 “ the means for obtaining it, those of fraternity,  
 “ even those of the *despotism of reason*, which is  
 “ only exercised for the happiness of mankind.  
 “ Tyranny perpetuates itself by depriving the  
 “ people of the very wish to be free, and we  
 “ have sworn to extirpate every species of tyranny.  
 “ *The will of the people is opposed to my plan;*  
 “ THE WILL OF A PEOPLE IN A STATE OF IN-  
 “ FANCY OR IMBECILITY WOULD BE NULL,  
 “ BECAUSE IT WOULD STIPULATE AGAINST  
 “ THEMSELVES.” After this meeting, CHAUS-  
 SARD, in a letter to the Commissaries at Douai,  
 said, “ *We pledge ourselves that the annexation of*  
 “ Belgium shall be declared without difficulty.”

One more remark will suffice to demonstrate,  
 to the conviction of every rational and independ-  
 ent mind, the *systematic plan of deception* practised  
 by the French Government in their negotiations  
 with the British Ministers. The decree of the  
 15th of December was passed in the very day on  
 which the Executive Council sent directions to  
 CHAUVELIN to disavow all hostile intentions on

<sup>5</sup> Procès-verbal de la conférence générale qui a eu lieu entre les  
 commissaires envoyés dans les différens arrondissemens de la bel-  
 gique, réunis à Bruxelles, p. 78.

their



their part ; and their instructions to their Commissioners in the Netherlands, the object of which I have *proved* to be the annexation of Belgium to France, were signed by the Council on the very day (the 8th of January, 1793,) on which Monf. LE BRUN, one of the members who subscribed them, wrote the Note to Lord GRENVILLE, containing those *explanations*, which constitute the basis of your crazy fabric, and on which the Council positively declared that France “ *had before renounced, and again renounced, every conquest; and that her occupation of the Low Countries should only continue during the war, and the time which may be necessary for the Belgians to consolidate THEIR LIBERTIES; after which let them be happy, France would find her recompence in THEIR FELICITY.*” Such a scene of profligacy has, I believe, seldom been exhibited on the diplomatic stage !

I have thus fairly stated the case of the French Government from their own testimony ; and I think no Englishman, who attends to the statement, and whose mind is untainted by faction, and unwarpd by the spirit of party, will agree with you, that the vague and unsatisfactory explanation offered by the French should have formed the basis of a farther negotiation. In fact, what remained as the subject of negotiation ? The different grounds of complaint, arising from the invasion of the territories of our Ally, and from the dangerous provisions of the decree of the

the 19th of November—a decree which all parties have allowed to be dangerous, and which *you* do not venture to justify—had been clearly specified, and distinct answers given; but answers, as I have shown, so evasive, and so replete with deception and fraud, that the Minister who had remained satisfied with them would have deserved to lose his place, if not his head. Nothing more therefore was to be done on our part; but if the French Government had chosen to reconsider their answers, and to offer such satisfaction as our Government would have been justified in accepting, ample time was allowed them for that purpose. Our Ministers rather retarded than precipitated matters, and, indeed, kept open the negotiation longer, in the opinion of many, than was consistent with the dignity of the nation. Their forbearance, in this respect, which was certainly laudable, from its *motive*, has supplied you with an argument, in which you seem most triumphantly to exult, although one more weak or more silly was never called in to the support of a bad cause. You tell us, that Mons. CHAUVELIN was directed, on the 24th of January, to quit this kingdom, solely, “because the French monarchy “had been finally terminated by the destruction “of the King;” and hence you sagaciously infer, that the establishment of a republic in France was the bar to negotiation, and the impediment to the continuance of peace.

The fact is, that our Ministers, actuated by an earnest

earnest desire to avert, if possible, the calamities of war, had suffered M. CHAUVELIN to remain in England, even after the insincerity of the French Government had been clearly established, and their hostile intentions fully ascertained. It was probably hoped, that they would ultimately be led to act more consistently with the principles of justice, and the rights of independent nations; and therefore the British Government were willing to leave open every door to negotiation, that the French might renew it whenever they pleased. The dismissal of CHAUVELIN, though an act which properly marked their indignation at the murder of his Sovereign, (an indignation which was nearly, though I am sorry to say, not quite, universal throughout the kingdom,) made no difference in the disposition of the British Cabinet, who, far from considering this measure as tending to accelerate the commencement of hostilities, sent subsequent instructions to Lord AUCKLAND, then Ambassador at the Hague, to hold a conference with DUMOURIEZ on the frontiers of Holland; and the very day appointed for that conference, the object of which, on the part of England, was to facilitate any means that might be proposed for the preservation of peace, was chosen by the National Convention—as if they were determined, in *every* instance, to add insult to injury—for the publication of their declaration of war!!!

Our Ministers had sufficiently proved, by their  
conduct



conduct after the establishment of a republic in France, that they did not conceive the change of government in that country to be a sufficient reason for breaking off all intercourse with it; on the contrary, they had evinced the strongest disposition to preserve the tranquillity that subsisted between the two nations. They had, no doubt, in common with all honest and upright men, viewed with astonishment and indignation, the subversion of a monarchy, which had subsisted for fourteen centuries, and which the whole kingdom had recently sworn to maintain; but which, nevertheless, had been suddenly destroyed, *by acclamation*, on the motion of a *strolling player*; they had certainly contemplated, with horror, the multiplied crimes which accompanied and followed this dreadful convulsion; but still they did not suffer these honourable feelings to involve the nation in a war; and, though they prudently desisted from giving their sanction to such atrocious proceedings, by formally acknowledging the authority of the French usurpers, they studiously avoided all kind of interference in the internal government of that degraded country, even when the law of nations, agreeably to the interpretation of the best juriconsults, would have justified such interference.<sup>6</sup>

You may perhaps be disposed to ask, what kind of satisfaction it was that our Ministers re-

<sup>6</sup> See Vattel, B. 2. C. 4.

quired, and how that satisfaction was to be given? These questions are easily answered. All that Lord GRENVILLE called upon France to do, was to evince a disposition “ *to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandizement, and to confine herself within her own territories, without insulting other Governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights.*” The mode of evincing the disposition required was by a repeal of the offensive decrees, a formal disavowal by the legislature of the principles which they proclaimed, and an immediate evacuation of the territory of our Ally. This was a demand which it was perfectly reasonable, and even indispenfibly necessary, for one party to enforce; and which the other might have complied with without any forfeiture of dignity, or sacrifice of independence; and, indeed, nothing but a previous determination to force this country into a war, and “ *to brave all Europe,*” for the accomplishment of the most destructive plans of *conquest and aggrandizement*, could possibly have influenced a refusal to comply with it.

Now, Sir, let me ask, *what* were those “ *concessions,*” which you are pleased to say France “made before and after our refusal to acknowledge her Ambassador?” Is it a *Briton* who condescends to give such an appellation to the pitiful equivocations, the vile subterfuges, and the daring falsehoods, of the French Executive Council? Had such extraordinary language been used, had  
such

such degrading sentiments been avowed, by any other than an "Honourable" Member of the British Senate, I should have been inclined to interrogate him in the coarse but honest language of DE FOE—"Art thou a true-born Englishman "or a base-born mongrel?" Your whole narrative of the proceedings, previous to the declaration of war by *France*, exhibits a gross ignorance of facts, a shameful perversion of circumstances, and "a misshapen heap" of false conclusions, which mark the advocate of party, but disgrace the friend of truth.

I shall now take a cursory view of your remarks on public transactions subsequent to the war, after a brief notice of those desultory observations which are scattered over your work, like the thistles on your native hills, that exhibit a spectacle of disgusting barrenness, deforming the soil they are unable to fertilize.

I have already exposed your perversion of facts, your false conclusions, and even your ignorance, in my investigation of the *explanation* of the Jacobin Ministry of France, offered in the name of their much-injured Monarch, and containing sentiments diametrically opposite to those which he avowed both before and after the period of its delivery. Farther to establish your ignorance, however, beyond all possibility of doubt, even on those common points on which ignorance remains wholly without excuse, it will be sufficient to refer



to the 35th page of your pamphlet, where, having noticed the answer given by Lord GRENVILLE, *on the 8th of July, 1792*, to the application of the French Government for the mediation of Great Britain, you say, “*Soon after this* the unhappy “King of France was brought from Versailles,” where, unfortunately, he had never been, since the month of October, 1789, when his palace was attacked by a regicide mob, who, after murdering his *faithful* Guards, (not including the PRINCE DE POIX,) proceeded, with LA FAYETTE at their head, to drag him, in savage triumph, to the capital.—With the same attention to facts you talk of the intreaties of Louis the Sixteenth, after the war had begun, to the Emperor JOSEPH, who died fourteen months before the declaration of war.

In your zealous attempt to exculpate the French from the charge of aggression, an attempt to which you was doubtless impelled by a laudable principle of *gratitude*, for the *eulogies* which their legislators had publicly bestowed on you, for your defence of their friend and associate, *Thomas Paine*, you exultingly proclaim, that they had not extended the limits of their empire before the treaty of Pilnitz was signed; nor had even invaded the Netherlands before the war was begun. Your first assertion is not strictly correct, because the French had taken possession of Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin, several months before the treaty of Pilnitz was signed, though they were not formally

formally annexed to France until the completion of the new constitution in 1791. As to their forbearance to invade a neighbouring State previous to a declaration of war, it constitutes such a theme for praise as, I believe, none but yourself would have thought of selecting; though, as you had determined to commend the French, it must be confessed you would have had some difficulty in finding a better subject.

In describing the effects on the state of France, of what you choose to term "our unhappy interference," that is, our resistance of the right of universal legislation, and our opposition of force to force, after an unprovoked and long-premeditated declaration of war against us, you represent our conduct, not very consistently, as having tended, at the same time, to consolidate the republic,<sup>7</sup> by the promotion of internal union; and

<sup>7</sup> It was certainly the object of the Brissotin faction, in provoking the war, *to consolidate the republic*, by the diffusion of republican principles, not only in France, but in the neighbouring States; admitting therefore the justice of your inference, your argument will undoubtedly prove, that the plan of those perjured destroyers of a constitution which they had sworn to maintain, has been so far attended with success. MALLET DU PAN, indisputably the best of all the writers on the revolution, thus explained the objects of the war, on the part of the French, in the year 1793.

"The revolution and the war are inseparable; they have one common stock; all the means of revolution are means of war.

"In provoking this terrible conflict, and in rendering it general, the republicans had six corresponding objects.

" 1. To

and to produce that system of terror and proscription which created a general mistrust. If the union you describe had really prevailed, the system of terror would have been wholly unnecessary; but as the system of terror did in fact exist, the pretended union is an offspring of your own imagination. Indeed to talk of the union of a country in which, according to the most moderate computation of the *Republican* Generals, SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN have perished, in a *civil war*, in one district, is as preposterous as the imputation of the enormities which have been committed in France to the opposition which

“ 1. To consolidate the French revolution, and to make it a *social* revolution.

“ 2. Not to leave a throne standing, nor any government whatever existing on any other bases than those of an unlimited, armed, and deliberative democracy.

“ 3. To subvert all distinctions, and to despoil all proprietors; the nobility after the clergy; the colonies after the nobility; the monied men with the colonies; commerce with the monied men; and the state-creditors with commerce.

“ 4. To ruin men of property by excessive and arbitrary contributions, until the moment should arrive when they might be expelled, by force, from their patrimonial estates.

“ 5. To accomplish this plan by vesting the sovereignty, power, the armed force, public offices, and the treasury, in *Sans-culottes* exclusively.

“ 6. Lastly, to incorporate all the countries that might be conquered with France, by reducing to practice the French operations, in order to nourish the war by rapine, and to sustain rapine by the war.”—*Considerations sur la Nature de la Revolution de France*, p. 35, 36,

This is the very system which the French republicans have invariably pursued, from the period of the declaration of war against Austria to the present time.

the



she has provoked from the belligerent powers is false. But I shall not waste my time, by stooping to a serious confutation of such gross absurdities, which have been before advanced by your countryman and fellow-labourer in the field of politics, Lord LAUDERDALE, and have been before detected and exposed by different writers. If you be really as ignorant as you appear to be on the subject, and wish for information, you may very easily obtain it, by a reference to the publications quoted in the margin.<sup>8</sup>

In the same perverse spirit and with equal truth you ascribe the emigration of the Royalists, and the seizure of their estates, to the same cause, and boldly assert, that, but for the war, the Emigrants "would have remained within the bosom of France;" whereas it is notorious, that one of the specific grounds of complaint alledged by the Brissotin faction against the Emperor, was the assemblage of large bodies of Emigrants in his dominions; and that the decree for the confiscation of their property was passed by the Legislative Assembly *before* the declaration of war. The contempt which the extreme puerility of your arguments<sup>9</sup> extorts is lost in surprize at the weakness of

<sup>8</sup> "Observations on the Emigration of Dr. Joseph Priestley," &c. "A short Account of the late Revolution in Geneva, and of the Conduct of France towards that Republic, from October 1792, to October 1794, by Francis D'Ivernois, Esq." and "The Bloody Buoy."

<sup>9</sup> You affirm (p. 116,) that "nothing but the *practical enjoyment*"

of their basis.—But the foundation being destroyed, the superstructure falls of course, exhibiting, in its flimsy ruins, an object for the derision of sense, the scorn of judgement, the deploration of vanity, and the lamentations of egotism.

Your general ideas on the causes of revolutions in a State, and the basis of civil government, appear to me to be as crude and undigested as your particular application of them is false and unwarranted. Your grand principle, as far as I can understand it, is—that all lawful “government is a “voluntary emanation from the whole people”; a principle which has been before advanced by that arch-propagator of wild conceits, that wholesale fabricator of fantastical systems of polity, (accuse me not of political blasphemy!) *John Locke*, who had scarcely given birth to this shapeless abortion, than he crushed it at a stroke, by proving the *impossibility* of its existence. He was compelled to acknowledge that “*the coming into society upon such terms would be—only to go out again.*”<sup>1</sup>

All the brilliant fabrics, therefore, which you “*ment of good government* can inspire enthusiasm.” Now, you and other members of your party have invariably expatiated on the enthusiasm of the French, and as it is certain that they never displayed more enthusiasm than during the reign of ROBESPIERRE, it follows, of necessity, that, in your estimation, his system of government was a good system.

<sup>1</sup> P. 127, 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Treatise of Civil Government*, B. 2, C. 8, p. 185.

have



have erected on this sandy basis must dissolve and "leave not a wreck behind." The examination of the important question of the origin of government would necessarily lead me into a much wider range of discussion than the limits of a mere tract would allow; beside it is a subject which has been discussed by much abler pens than mine; and has recently attracted the attention of a writer who possesses every requisite for such an investigation—a firm and vigorous mind, extensive information, profound erudition, sound judgement, acute penetration, and great discriminative powers.

In your flimsy attempt to prove the beneficial effects of your visionary system, in the prevention of internal disorders in a State, you ask, with some degree of triumph, "When the people themselves actually choose the popular branch of the legislature, upon what principle can rebellion exist?—How can a people be brought to resist a voluntary emanation from themselves?"—And you assert that "Even if such a

<sup>3</sup> The Reverend JOHN WHITAKER.—See his treatise on "The Real Origin of Government."—This gentleman, I understand, is now engaged in the composition of a political work on a subject of considerable importance. A mind like his, enlarged by science and an unwearied application to liberal and useful pursuits, should not remain inactive, at such a momentous period as the present, when wild and fantastic notions are afloat, and all the principles of subordination—the very essence of society—are exposed to the imminent danger of fatal relaxation, if not of absolute destruction:—on *such* minds, at *such* times, the community has an imperative claim which ought not to be resisted.



“ body should occasionally betray its trust, the  
 “ remedy is at hand, without a tumult or revolu-  
 “ tion.”—Such questions and such assertions  
 might have passed current with the generality of  
 mankind ten years ago, and have made no bad  
 figure in the abstract speculations of the philoso-  
 phers of that day ; but it is really too great an in-  
 sult on the common sense of the public to bring  
 them forward in the seventh year of the French  
 Revolution, which, in the history of its legislative  
 bodies, affords a full answer to the one, and a com-  
 plete confutation of the other.—The principle of  
 universal suffrage, which you consider as a pana-  
 cea for all political diseases, was carried much  
 farther in France, even in the first Legisla-  
 tive Assembly, than you express a wish to carry it  
 in this country ; and yet *Rebellion* did certainly  
 exist ; and *Tumults* and *Revolutions* prevail.—  
 Indeed not a year, nor scarcely a month, passed  
 away from 1789 to 1796, without some popular  
 insurrection of an alarming nature.—During that  
 period no less than three *Revolutions* (so called by  
 the French themselves) occurred ; viz.—on the  
 tenth of August 1792 ;—the thirty-first of May  
 1793 ; and the twenty-seventh of July 1794 ; and  
 such were the good order and social harmony  
 which obtained, that more persons were actually  
 condemned and executed in France, during that  
 period, than in all Europe together, during the  
 present century.\*—The establishment of the pre-  
 sent

\* The mere list of the names of the persons condemned filled  
 no

sent constitution in October, 1795, might justly be termed a fourth revolution, for an essential change in the system of Government took place. Though it is somewhat extraordinary, that, at this period, when there was, as you say, a just and legitimate representation of the people, which according to your own doctrine, can only consist of "a voluntary emanation from themselves," the people actually *rebelled* against the legislative body and literally accused it "of having violated not only the express provisions of the new constitution, but the fundamental principles of civil liberty;" and, unfortunately for your assertion, they found, to their cost, that although that body "had betrayed its trust" no "remedy was at hand," even *with tumult*. The *vox populi* was silenced by the thunder of the cannon, and the excellence of their "just and legitimate representation," was established beyond the reach of opposition or even of murmur.

In the illustration of your principle you are not more fortunate than in your assertion of the principle itself. I shall not attempt to follow you through the whole of this, because I honestly confess that I am at a loss to comprehend how a great part of it applies to the question. What I do understand of your metaphor I know to be

no less than *Twelve Volumes* in the summer of 1795.—See "Les Brigands Demaqués, ou Mémoires pour servir à L'Histoire du Temps Présent, par *Auguste Danican*."

false. You say, "When the sap which *belongs* to the entire structure of the vegetable kingdom, is obstructed in its course to the remotest branches of every plant that grows, it is not merely these *defrauded* branches which perish; the trunk itself, that monopolizes the nourishment of which it ought only to be the conduit, is speedily encrusted with canker, and consumed to its very root." To discover the fallacy of this doctrine, I need go no farther than my own garden, which, at present, contains many subjects of the vegetable kingdom—alias, trees, in which the sap has been "obstructed to the remotest branches," without producing the fatal consequences which you announce; I have *lopped off* (do not quarrel with the expression because it has already excited your *virtuous* indignation on another occasion,) I have lopped off "the *defrauded* branches," but the glutton trunks, so far from dying with repletion, as you foretell, exhibit strong symptoms of robust vigour, and send out fresh and healthy shoots.<sup>5</sup>

As you entertain such false notions on the first principles of government, it is not surprizing that you should mistake the causes which promote its dissolution. You state the French revolution to have been "provoked by acts of injustice and

<sup>5</sup> I give you ample credit for your knowledge of "*The Geronium*," and do not question your skill in the cultivation of "*The Tree of Liberty*," but cannot admit that you are equally well acquainted with the whole vegetable kingdom.

"oppression,"



“oppression,” and paint it—as “the awful and  
 “majestic course of freedom against *usurped au-*  
*thority.*” The *forced* change of system which  
 has taken place in Holland and the Netherlands  
 you ascribe to a similar cause, to the prevalence  
 of “a restrictive system of government.” And  
 this cause you exhibit not as partial but universal  
 in its operation; and consequently it can be limited  
 neither to time nor place. Were this really the  
 case, let me ask, how it happened, that the “acts  
 “of injustice and oppression,” and “the usurped  
 “authority,” which were unquestionably exercised  
 by LOUIS XI. and by LOUIS XV. in France, and  
 by the first WILLIAM and the eighth HENRY in  
 England, did not produce a revolution in those  
 countries? And how it came, that the revolution  
 in France happened under the most mild, benevo-  
 lent, and virtuous Monarch, that ever sat upon  
 the French throne—a Prince, whose chief study  
 was the correction of abuses, and the promotion  
 of his people’s happiness? The fact is, that the  
 causes of this political phenomenon, which has  
 convulsed all the kingdoms of Europe, were very  
 different from what you represent them to have  
 been. It originated in the profligate designs of a  
 few factious individuals, who had the address to  
 render the virtuous propensities of one part of  
 the community, and the *bad passions* of the other,  
 subservient to the accomplishment of their own  
 base purpose. The revolutions in the Netherlands  
 and in Holland were produced by French intrigues  
 and by French *arms*. The arguments that were  
 made

made use of to allure and to mislead the people, in each of the three countries, were such as must make a considerable impression wherever they are employed.<sup>6</sup> Hold out as lures to the populace, under the best possible constitution, the abolition of imposts, an increase of wages, and a participation of the property of their superiors, and the man who will assert, that crowds will not flock to the standard of Rebellion, must know very little of the human mind. This, however, is a delicate subject to discuss, and its discussion can answer no *good* purpose.<sup>7</sup> As for the "awful and majestic course of freedom against usurped authority," 'tis a well-rounded period, and would sound very well in the mouth of a patriotic orator in the tribune of the Jacobin Club, in the rostrum at Copenhagen House, on the scaffold in Palace Yard, or at the bar of the Old Bailey; but is as little applicable to the state of France since the year 1789, as to the society of "Friends to the People," or to the *convicted* felons at Botany Bay. Your ideas of *usurped authority*, however, as applied to a government which had stood the test of fourteen centuries, may serve as a clue to your plans of political reform.

<sup>6</sup> See PUBLICOLA CHAUSSARD, *Des Moyens de Revolution*, p. 48, *et suiv.*

<sup>7</sup> "Le public ne connaît encore que la superficie de la révolution d'aujourd'hui, et on ne saurait trop deplorer l'imprudence de ceux qui espèrent s'en garantir en élevant quelques murailles autour de son enceinte."—*Considérations sur la Nature de la Revolution en France.*



Having cleared away the literary thistles from the barren field of declamation, I come to your observations on the conduct of Ministers since the war; and here let me premise, that the extreme anxiety of your party to fix the charge of aggression on the British Government is entitled to the praise of policy, however feeble its pretensions may be to the palm of patriotism—for unless you could succeed in this *laudable* effort, all your violent harangues on the *consequences* of the war would be of little avail; because, if the war were just and necessary, Ministers could be no farther answerable for its consequences than as censure for mismanagement, during its progress, might attach to their conduct. Its justice and necessity, in my opinion, are established beyond all doubt; and, on the score of mismanagement, you only adduce one solitary charge, relating to the unfortunate expedition to Quiberon, in the summer of 1795. In this case you are the mere echo of your party, who, judging, like yourself, solely from *events*, in their eagerness to inflict an odium on the Secretary at War, (whose high character, zeal, and abilities, are fit objects of reprobation to the advocates for the French,) presumed to condemn a military operation which they were incompetent to appreciate. This expedition you style in one place “merciless and impolitic,” and, in another, you represent it as “detestable,” and as having “covered its authors with everlasting shame.” You farther observe, that “The Government of France had then assumed a  
“ regular



" regular form, and was in the exercise of a regular  
 " lar legalized authority. *The devoted handful of*  
 " *unhappy fugitives from their country could do no-*  
 " *thing by the sword.* The expedition, therefore,  
 " was to *rekindle* the torch of discord amidst  
 " *twenty-five millions* of men, beginning to escape  
 " from its former fury, and *settled under an esta-*  
 " *blished Government.*" I do not recollect ever to  
 have read a more false and exaggerated statement  
 of any public occurrence, except in Lord LAU-  
 DERDALE'S " Letters to the Peers of Scotland,"  
 in which, in the same spirit, he talks of *voluntary*  
*loans*, which were enforced with the bayonet, and  
*patriotic volunteers*, who were led to the armies,  
 like galley-slaves, in handcuffs.—If the expedition  
 had really been such as you have here described  
 it, it was your duty, as a Member of Parliament,  
 to impeach the Minister who planned it; but this  
 would not have suited the purpose of your party,  
 for it would have given rise to an *enquiry*, and the  
 natural result of enquiry is the establishment of  
*truth*. Any opinion of mine on the subject would  
 be entitled to as little attention as your own; but  
 the testimony of a French General, who served  
 the republic for three years, in *La Vendée*, and  
 who was perfectly acquainted with the senti-  
 ments, resources, and disposition of the people,  
 will, by the public at least, be deemed decisive.

General DANICAN, in his Memoirs, speaking  
 of this expedition, says, " Another opportunity  
 " *so favourable* as that which was lost at Quiberon,  
 " will

“ will with difficulty be found.—*There the means*  
 “ *of success presented themselves on all sides; abun-*  
 “ *dance of ammunition, arms, money, and*  
 “ *troops; the well-known devotion of the Britons;*  
 “ *revolts at Paris; a dreadful famine in the heart*  
 “ *of France; a general contempt for the Govern-*  
 “ *ment;—every thing seemed to unite for the*  
 “ *purpose of ensuring success to the Royalists; and*  
 “ *if, at that epoch, they had obtained one signal*  
 “ *advantage, all France would have declared in*  
 “ *their favour.*”—He afterwards observes, that  
 “ Three thousand men,” if they had pursued the  
 plan of operation which he points out, “ might  
 “ have changed the fate of France in a week.<sup>8</sup>”  
 So that the *plan* itself appears, upon the evidence  
 of a man, fully competent to decide on the ques-  
 tion, to have been founded in wisdom; and the  
 failure is solely to be ascribed to the mode of car-  
 rying it into execution, which, of course, de-  
 pended on the officers who conducted the expe-  
 dition.

But, say you, “ What was this proceeding but  
 “ the very system we had imputed to France, and  
 “ proclaimed with horror to the universe ?” The  
 jaundiced eye of party could alone descry any re-  
 semblance in transactions so different in their  
 nature. The French had holden out an invitation  
 to rebel to all the nations of Europe, indiscrimi-

<sup>8</sup> “ Les Brigands Demasqués,” p. 182, 183.

nately, whether at peace or at war with them; and had, to give effect to the measure, by an order of their legislature, caused such invitations to be translated into all foreign languages. By the voluntary offer of her protection to insurgents, France thus endeavoured to produce insurrections where harmony prevailed, and to disorganize the existing institutions of Europe, for the purpose of establishing a general system of her own. Our Ministers, on the contrary, in exercising the legal rights of war against a power which had been guilty of an unprovoked aggression, and which had forcibly compelled us to engage in the contest, confined their operations to affording assistance to a body of men, who fought in defence of a long-established system which they had solemnly sworn to maintain, against a Government founded in perjury, violence, and murder, which had robbed them of their birthrights, despoiled them of their property, and passed upon them a sentence of perpetual banishment—a Government, to which they had never submitted, and to which they owed neither fidelity nor allegiance. The resemblance, therefore, exists only in your own imagination; the difference is fundamental and radical.

You stigmatize that system of hostilities which tends to divide a nation against itself; but you forget that this system is connected with the very basis of the French revolution which you so warmly admire, and has been invariably pursued by



by the Rulers of France from the year 1789 to the present moment. Yet not one word of censure has *their* conduct, in this respect, extorted from your *impartial* pen, the whole stock of whose gall seems to be reserved for your political opponents in England.

After your preposterous and vain attempt to prove that the British Ministers were anxious to promote the war, which must inevitably thwart all their favourite plans of finance, you labour, with equal zeal, and with equal success, to demonstrate their aversion from peace, which would enable them to accomplish those plans, and to relieve themselves from those embarrassments, and from that serious load of responsibility, which necessarily attach to a state of warfare. In pursuit of this design, you are weak enough to renew those arguments which have been repeatedly urged, with much greater force and ability, by the leaders of your party, in the Senate, and which have been as repeatedly confuted by their opponents; but on this, as on other points, you probably hoped that the confutation might be forgotten, and that your *partial* view of the question might create a contrary impression to that which a fair and *full* discussion of it had produced, on the public mind. Anticipating the lapse of years, you, perhaps, was reduced to exclaim, in the language of your book, "Time has now placed  
 " in the shade the arguments by which wisdom  
 " triumphed: they are there only viewed by  
 " learning

“learning and retirement,<sup>8</sup> which enables cowardice and folly by *artifices* formerly defeated, the easier to impose upon a busy or an unthinking world.<sup>9</sup>” But fortunately this is not the case; all

<sup>8</sup> The personification of *Retirement* is, I believe, a *new* thought, and perfectly poetical; but that is not surprizing, as “*Fiction*”—you know—“is the soul of poetry.”—There is something, it must be confessed, extremely ingenious in the idea of *Retirement* *viewing arguments*. But, were I to point out, with critical accuracy, all similar beauties which your work contains, my strictures would be as copious as the abstract of “*The Crimes of the French Revolution*,” by Citizen PRUDHOMME, which I mean, when I have leisure, to translate, and to prefix to it a suitable dedication to your friend Mr. Fox, as the zealous admirer of “that stupendous monument of human wisdom and human happiness.”

<sup>9</sup> It was doubtless, under this impression, that you devoted no less than three pages, to a dissertation, the object of which is to shew the *absurdity* of supposing that the Christian Religion was exposed to any degree of danger from the French revolution, and the principles which its votaries proclaimed.—This is a subject of too serious and important a nature to be discussed with levity; I give implicit credit to your professions of attachment to the religion of CHRIST, and have not a doubt that you privately practice what you openly profess; but I must contend, that you are wholly ignorant of the proceedings which have passed in France, not only on many political, but on all religious, topics: for you really reason like a man who had just awakened from a “seven years’ sleep.”

Had you paid that close attention to the French revolution, which could alone enable you to judge of its principles and effects, you would have known, that, on the 14th of December, 1792, in a debate on the establishment of public schools for the education of youth, M. DUPONT, a member of the National Convention, and who, if I mistake not, is now a member of one of the Councils, began his speech with the following exclamation—“What, thrones are overturned! Sceptres broken! Kings expire! and yet the altars of God remain!” that he proceeded to propose the abolition



all the arguments employed stand recorded in the debates of Parliament; and I may safely refer, not,

indeed,

abolition of those altars, and proclaimed himself *an atheist*, amidst the reiterated plaudits of the Assembly, and of the persons in the galleries:—you would have known, that the blasphemous doctrine that “*Death is an eternal sleep*,” was sanctioned by the authority of the legislature:—you would have known, that, by the same power, the abolition of the Christian æra was proclaimed, and the Saviour of the World impiously made to yield precedence to the republic of France!—you would have known, that, on the 7th of November, 1793, *the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul*, were formally disavowed in the Convention, and the resurrection of the dead declared to have been only “*preached by Superstition for the torment of the living*!”—You would have known, that, two days after, in the same place, all the religions of the world were asserted to be *the daughters of Ignorance and Pride*; that it was decided to be “the duty of the Convention to assume the honourable office of *diffusing truth over the whole earth*,” and that, as a part of this duty, that Assembly decreed, “That its express repunciation of all religious worship should”—like its invitations to rebellion—“*be translated into all foreign languages*.”—you would have known, that it was stated, and received, in the Convention, as “*an acknowledged truth, that the adversaries of religion have deserved well of their country*.”—you would have known, that the temple of the Almighty had been profaned by the worship of a prostitute, personating the *Goddess of Reason*, and that the cathedral of Paris had exhibited the monstrous spectacle of a pagan sacrifice, by a people who had recently abolished Christianity:—and lastly, you would have known, that, on the 30th of November, 1793, the pupils of a new republican school appeared at the bar of the Convention, when their leader declared—I shudder while I commit the horrid blasphemy to paper—that “*HE AND HIS SCHOOL-FELLOWS DETESTED GOD!*” “*that instead of learning the Scriptures, they learned the Declaration of Rights, and made the Constitution their Catechism*,” and that the President of this Pandemonium expressed *the satisfaction of the Convention* at the declaration they had made; the young Demons were *admitted to the honours of the sitting*, and received *the kiss of fraternity, amidst the loudest applause!!!*

When

When



indeed, "the busy and unthinking world," who swallow every dose that folly or vanity administers, but every man of plain sense, and unbiaſſed judgement, to thoſe authentic documents, for an ample demonſtration of the fallacy of the poſitions which you have inconfiderately undertaken to defend.

It is a fact worthy of obſervation, that, in a tract, in which you profeſs to review the *cauſes* and *conſequences* of the momentous conteſt in which we have been compelled to engage, you do not once make mention of the *declaration of war*. You keep this circumſtance moſt ſtudiouſly from the light, you ſcreen it from the eye of the reader, and would doubtleſs moſt willingly conſign it to everlaſting oblivion. It is indeed a fact which bears *primâ facie* evidence of the aggreſſion of the enemy, and which, when coupled with the preceding circumſtances which I have detailed, carries irrefiſtible conviction to the mind. The omiſſion of ſuch a fact exhibits a mark of prudence, but no ſymptom of candour.

The war had ſcarcely begun, when the oppoſition, whoſe conduct during the negotiation had

When you are apprized of theſe *facts*, I think you will acknowledge, that the apprehenſions which you reprobate were not without foundation. Chriſtianity is, I know, eſta bliſhed on too firm and broad a baſis, is derived from a ſource too ſacred, to be eaſily ſhaken; but, ſorry I am to ſay, that the progreſs of Infidelity is rapid, and the zeal of her votaries indefatigable.

extorted

extorted public marks of gratitude from our enemies, hastened to proclaim to the world their total disapprobation of it, and to evince a settled determination to obstruct its pursuit by all the means in their power. This naturally had the effect of encouraging the French to persevere in that aggressive system, our resistance of which had occasioned the rupture. Their leaders were little acquainted with the nature of an English opposition; though *Kersaint* seems to have entertained a pretty just idea of the *object* of its chief; and as they had been persuaded, by the addresses of the factious clubs in this country,<sup>2</sup> that the people had

<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Fox has but one object in view, that of hurling his rival from the throne, and of retrieving at once so many parliamentary defeats, not less injurious to his interest, than inimical to his reputation."—In the same speech *Kersaint* says, "Mr. PITT would willingly avoid a war."—And again, "Mr. PITT, with a hope of not being reduced to the necessity of a war, offers to mediate among the belligerent powers."—KERSAINT, you see, did more justice to the Minister than you are disposed to do.

<sup>2</sup> Adverting to these societies, you say that the French revolution "appeared to have given to the zeal of some BRITISH REFORMERS a tinge of republicanism;" and you call the addresses of these men to the National Convention, on the abolition of monarchy, the effusions of an honest "but irregular zeal." What this tinge of republicanism, and this honest zeal really were, will be best seen by the expressions of the addressers themselves. The first address to the Convention from the society at Newington, dated October 31, concludes thus:—"In your undertaking to deliver from slavery and despotism the brave nations which border your frontiers, how holy is the humanity which prompts you to break their chains." These men, even at that period, were aware of the real designs of the French, yet you still remain blind to them.—

The



had imbibed *their* ideas of liberty and equality, and

The address from the *Revolution Society* in London, (most aptly denominated,) dated November 5, says, "ABOVE ALL we rejoice in the late revolution of the 10th of August," (effected by a band of thieves and assassins, whom Mr. DENIS O'BRIEN, your quondam foe, but now your political friend and associate, has recently transformed into *heroes*,) "so necessary to secure to you the advantages which *the former* had taught you to expect." These *revolutionists* appear to have watched the progress of French liberty with an attentive eye, and to have justly appreciated the views and designs of the original reformers in France. That a small band of factious adventurers had, as I have already observed, planned the subversion of the French monarchy so early as 1789, admits not of a doubt. A speech delivered by *Citizen Dupont*, in the Convention, the same which I have before quoted for another purpose, contains this memorable passage.—He anticipates the time when disciples will flock from all parts of Europe to study under the new philosophers of France, whom he represents as teaching "this man, the system of the universe, and developing the progress of all human knowledge; that, *perfecting the social system*, and showing, in our decree of the 17th June, 1789, the seeds of the insurrections of the 14th of July, and the 10th of August, and of all those insurrections which are spreading with such rapidity throughout Europe, so that these young strangers, on their return to their respective countries, may spread the same lights, and may operate, for the happiness of mankind, similar revolutions throughout the world."—It is essential to recollect, that this speech, which was received with vast applause, was delivered on the 14th of December, 1792, the very day preceding the famous decree, on which I have before commented; and therefore affords the strongest corroboration of the proofs I have adduced to show the falsehood and insincerity of those professions of respecting all other Governments, and of renouncing all acts of aggression, on which you have laid so much stress.

The *Revolution Society* farther observe, "We feel an agreeable sensation in beholding that this right of insurrection has been successfully exercised in so large a country as that of the French republic."

The



and that a revolution in England was near at hand,  
so

The society of "The Friends of Liberty and Equality at Belfast," say—"For the glory of humanity, may your declaration of rights be every where put in practice."

An address from "Several Societies" of Englishmen, calling themselves "*an oppressed part of mankind*," and boasting of the rapid increase of their numbers, and their determination to follow the example of the French, say—"You are already free, but Britons are preparing to be so. A triple-alliance, not of crowned heads, but of the people of America, France, and Great Britain, will give liberty to Europe, and peace to the world." This patriotic effusion of honest zeal was signed by MAURICE MARGAROT, and your client, THOMAS HARDY.

In the address of an English society established at Paris, or in CONDORCET'S remarks on it, for it is not possible to decide from the paper itself by which it is written, is the following passage—"The opening of the session of Parliament which approaches will infallibly become the occasion of the reforms which are the most urgent; such as those which regard the national representation—FROM THENCE TO THE ENTIRE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REPUBLIC, the transition will be the less tedious, because the foundations of liberty have long existed in England."

The "Constitutional Society of London" presented their address on the 28th of November, by the hands of their deputies, Messrs. Joel Barlow and John Frost, one of whom, it does not appear which, prefaced its delivery with a speech, in which he observed, "After the example given by France, revolutions will become easy: Reason is about to make a rapid progress, and, IT WOULD NOT BE EXTRAORDINARY, IF, IN A MUCH LESS SPACE OF TIME THAN CAN BE IMAGINED, THE FRENCH SHOULD SEND ADRESSES OF CONGRATULATION TO A NATIONAL CONVENTION OF ENGLAND!"

The address itself, after aptly congratulating the Convention on the cowardly assassinations of the 10th of August, and the multiplied acts of perjury and rebellion which ensued, and declaring the conviction of the society that they spoke "*the sentiments of the majority of the English nation*," concluded thus—"Other nations will soon follow your steps in this career of improvement, and,  
L "rising

so would they be led to suppose from the speeches  
of

*" rising from their lethargy, WILL ARM THEMSELVES FOR THE  
" PURPOSE OF CLAIMING THE RIGHTS OF MAN, with that all-  
" powerful voice that man cannot resist !"*

It was in his answer to this address that the President of the Convention observed, *the moment no doubt was approaching, in which the French would bring congratulations to the National Convention of Great Britain.* The Deputies were admitted to the honour of the sitting, and the Speech, Address, and Answer, were ordered to be distributed throughout France, and *to be translated into all languages.*

In his answer to the speech of another deputation, (on the 28th of November,) from the English and Irish resident in Paris, the President said—*" Royalty in Europe is either destroyed, or on  
" the point of perishing—and the declaration of rights, placed  
" by the side of thrones, is a devouring fire which will consume  
" them !"*

I have taken the trouble to extract these passages, in order to show what were the *real* designs of the seditious clubs established at this period in England, and of the French Government itself, which undoubtedly wished to render them subservient to its own views of promoting a revolution in this country—the success of which those men had taught it to believe was infallible—and also to ascertain your sense of *an honest but irregular zeal, of a tinge of republicanism, and of British reformers.* To make any comment on such extracts would, in my apprehension, be to offer an insult to the common sense of the public. They are sufficiently plain to speak for themselves, and the mind that required elucidation would be incapable of profiting by it.

I could mention a man, who had once the honour to command a British regiment, and who still, if I mistake not, bears rank in the British service, that, even long after hostilities had begun between the two countries, afforded all the information and assistance in his power to the French : he assisted in drilling and disciplining their recruits ; and, is even said to have suggested the horrid idea of massacring all the English prisoners, and of poisoning the arms that were to be employed against his countrymen !

But that you could be so bold or so weak as to call these atrocious



of opposition,<sup>3</sup> that they should find effectual  
support

cious proceedings, which had for their *avowed* object—if I am able to comprehend the import of language, and the force of expressions—nothing less than the subversion of the constitution, a *contemptible pretext* for adopting measures of precaution, would be to me a matter of surprize, if any effusions of *party spirit*, however disgraceful, could create surprize.

Exulting in the issue of the State Trials, you assert, what no man will be disposed to contradict, that “not a man has been *convicted* of any treason against the State;” and that no conspiracy against the Government has been *detected*. But if you mean to contend, that the existence of a treasonable conspiracy was not established, by the proceedings on the State Trials, to the conviction of a great majority of the nation, as well as to that of many of the Jurymen, I beg leave to enter my protest against any such affirmation. Numbers, *I know*, were firmly convinced of the existence of a conspiracy for overthrowing the constitution, although they might not be of opinion that sufficient evidence had been adduced to bring home the fact to the parties accused, and to justify a verdict of guilty. On this subject, therefore, you have no ground of triumph, and the miserable argument, you have attempted to build upon what I must consider as a pitiful evasion, can be of no avail.

While you bestow the extraordinary appellation of “*usurped authority*” upon the ancient monarchy of France, which had subsisted for fourteen centuries, you give the epithet *sacred* to the law of treason enacted in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of our third EDWARD. It is easy to perceive, that the same *leading principle* influences your decision in both cases—but the nature of that principle I shall not here attempt to define. I can, however, easily excuse even an excess of attachment to a statute which had for its object the application of a remedy to serious evils, which had, at that period, risen to an alarming height;—and I can as easily conceive that such attachment might be still increased by the facility which that statute afforded you for securing the escape of men, of whose guilt, *to a certain extent*, none but their friends or accomplices can, I think, entertain a doubt. But while the statute of the twenty-fifth of EDWARD III. gave a proper check to



support from that party, and that at all events the  
Ministers

the inconveniencies arising from constructive treason, it did not supply the necessary means for the prevention of treason, and was therefore inadequate to the end for which it was framed. Indeed, the legislators of that day seemed to be aware of this inadequacy, and therefore invited, as it were, in the statute itself, the attention of future legislators, to the supply of such farther provisions as the circumstances of the times might render necessary. The late Parliament, in the law which it passed on the subject of treason, a law which has been as severely as unjustly reprobated, (from the influence of the principle I have alluded to above,) by yourself and your party, did nothing more than accept this invitation of those very men whose provisions you describe as *sacred*.

—This subject is fully and ably discussed in "An Historical Essay on the Principles of political Associations in a State," by the Rev. JOHN BRAND:—a publication, from which you, as a *constitutional lawyer*, a politician, and one of "*The Friends of the People*," may derive much valuable, and, let me add, much *necessary* information.

You reprobate the conduct of the House of Commons, upon the business of the State Trials, in *erecting* themselves "into a Grand Jury to find capital bills of indictment for the Crown against *the People*,"—(here you prove, that the *British Reformers* affix to the word *People* \* precisely the same sense as the *French Jacobins*,)---"and to prejudice *their* causes by publishing the accusing evidence under the crushing weight of their authority." And yet, when the pamphlet ascribed to Mr. REEVES was the subject of discussion in the House, you made no scruple to act in a similar capacity, not only to *prejudge the cause*, but even to *anticipate the verdict of the Jury*. "So fully is my mind made up on the subject, that I will not hesitate, even on the instant, to declare, that were I a juror, sworn to try the author, I would, without going out of court, pronounce him guilty." (Nov. 23,

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\* We are to understand, then, that the Society of "Friends of the People," of which you are a member, are to be considered only as the Friends of Mess. Hardy, Thetwall, Holcroft, and Co. against whom such indictments were found.

Ministers would soon be compelled to subscribe to  
any

1795.)—"I have no hesitation in anticipating what the verdict of a Jury will be upon this case when before them." (Nov. 26, 1795.) *Parliamentary Reports*.—The hint, however, was not taken, and the Jury, notwithstanding your anticipation, pronounced a verdict of acquittal. As to your *consistency*, that is a point which I leave you to settle with *yourself*, and with the public.—I can easily account for it.

<sup>3</sup> It is notorious, that the leading members of opposition were considered by the French not only as friends to the republic, but as the advocates of revolutionary principles; and this idea was industriously propagated among the people of France, as a stimulus to their acquiescence, first in the declaration, and afterwards in the continuance, of the war. Of the prevalence and effect of this idea, innumerable instances might be cited.—In the autumn of 1793, a play was brought out at Paris, at the *Theatre de la Cité*, and received with unbounded applause, entitled "*The Opening of the Parliament of England*." Among the *Dramatis Personæ* are the KING, QUEEN, PRINCE OF WALES, Mess. PITT, FOX, SHERIDAN, and GREY. This last gentleman is directed by the author to be dressed in a red coat, with cropped hair, and boots—(*Grey doit être en habit rouge, cheveux à la Jacobine, des bottes*). The plot, as might be supposed, consists in the deposition and murder of the King, and the establishment of a republic.

" *Act II.—Scene V.*

" GREY, SHERIDAN, FOX, STANHOPE, &c.

" GREY. Beneficent Liberty has long quitted this isle; we no longer enjoy nature's first gift; but we were at least in possession of *peace*, plenty, the arts, and all the benefits which are compatible with a state of slavery. Why then are these taken from us? I hear the martial trumpet sound; soldiers, sailors, even workmen, are dragged to the field of combat. What is the reason of this immense preparation? What outrage have we to revenge, or what danger to dread? I put this question to you, PITT; answer me. Have you calculated the terrible effects of this unjust war? Our manufactories, our fields deserted, commerce expiring, credit shaken, thousands of men sacrificed, disgrace and infamy henceforth attached to  
" the

any terms that they in their wisdoms might choose  
to

" the very name we bear!—Such is your criminal work, such is  
" the fruit of your ridiculous pride. Senate, the people are  
" tired of their shameful servitude, they accuse you of being their  
" oppressors.——Legislators, it is no longer in your power to  
" save the country; adopt, therefore, the only measure which  
" Justice and Prudence avow. Declare to the sovereign people  
" that the exercise of the supreme power has reverted to them,  
" and let the Commons assemble throughout the three kingdoms;  
" this salutary step will restore you to the esteem of your fellow-  
" citizens. *France has been the first to set a great example to the*  
" *world, why do you hesitate to follow it? Let us abolish despotism,*  
" *and consecrate august liberty on its ruins.*

" SHERIDAN. I second the motion.

" FOX. I support it.

" STANHOPE. It is the only means by which we can save the  
" country, — — — — —

" FOX. Know, senators, that *Pitt* himself sowed the seeds of  
" the French revolution; he alternately lavished our treasures on  
" both parties, in order to balance their means and their strength.  
" He every where applauded the efforts of France; now he  
" encreases the number of her enemies, and excites their  
" rage.——

" *Scene VI.—The House of Lords.*

" (*The People standing round Fox.*)

" GREY. Your base oppressors have deserted their posts; they  
" are gone to plan your destruction. Look at this place, which  
" Pride and Hypocrisy have too long polluted; you should now  
" occupy, and purify it.—(*The People take possession of the Lords'*  
" *seats, and the throne.*)—People, your dearest interests are at  
" stake; discuss, deliberate with us, and let us unite to save the  
" State. The moment is come for you to resume your rights; quit,  
" at last, a state of slavery, and let us proclaim Liberty!

" PEOPLE. *Vive la Liberté!*"

[An alarm is here given that the French have landed,  
and that the troops are preparing to march against  
them.]

" GREY. Let us all to arms, my friends; rouse yourselves,  
" and



to impose. The first motion brought forward by  
Mr.

"and exercise your supreme power against your enemies; then let  
"us march to meet the French, not to fight, but to embrace them.  
"Let us swear an eternal friendship to them on the tombs of our  
"tyrants. Come, citizens, follow us; your friends will lead  
"you on to victory. War, war with despots, and *Vive la Li-*  
"*berté!*

"PEOPLE. War with tyrants! *Vive la Liberté!*"

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

"The honourable functions of Public Accuser," are then conferred on Mr. Fox, who is made to pass sentence on his Sovereign. This being settled, Mr. GREY thus addresses the People—  
"Citizens, it is not enough to have destroyed the tyrant, you must  
"also destroy tyranny; you must abolish royalty, or renounce the  
"happiness of being free. People, your will made Kings, it is  
"your business to annihilate them. — — — — —

"Let us then found, after the example of our neighbours, an  
"imperishable republic, on the basis of equality. Pure democracy, a republic, or no liberty!

"PEOPLE. A republic! a republic!

"GREY. You have consecrated the republic; let us now swear  
"that it shall be one and indivisible. This done, we will go to  
"meet the French; we are worthy of them, because we have  
"imitated their conduct. They were our enemies, while we  
"were governed by tyrants; but now a holy friendship will unite  
"us for ever; and may our example accelerate the happy moment, when all the people of the earth will form but one  
"family!"

I shall not be suspected of imputing to the gentlemen whose names are here introduced the sentiments which the author has been pleased to ascribe to them. My only object in giving these extracts is to show what an impression was made by their speeches in Parliament on the minds of the people of France—speeches which, as far as they were rendered instrumental in that country to a continuance of the war, were certainly prejudicial to the interests of England.

The impression thus created was so strong, that, when the  
English

Mr. GREY in February, 1793, had for its object to fix the charge of aggression on the British Government ; but the House, very properly, repelled the idea, with that virtuous indignation which became a British Senate, jealous of the honour and dignity of their country. Mr. GREY's proposition to address the King to put an immediate stop to hostilities, was rejected by a large and decisive majority. In fact, it could be considered as little less than an insult to the common sense of the members, after the treacherous conduct of the French, who, as I have shown, endeavoured to impose upon our Ministers, by professions to which their practice, at the very time, gave the lie direct ; after the strenuous efforts made by our Ministers to preserve tranquillity, by stating, clearly and specifically, the grounds upon which it might be preserved, and "*giving* "*and even courting explanations*" of a pacific tendency ; after it had been proved, that the French would not suffer us to remain at peace, unless we consented to sacrifice the honour and safety of the State, to call upon the House to declare that our enemies had acted right, and the British Government wrong, was, in my apprehension, an insult of the grossest nature.—Such a proposition, brought forward at such a time and under such

English resident in France were all imprisoned, in consequence of a decree of the Convention, they were frequently asked why they did not obtain letters from the leaders of opposition, which would certainly procure them their liberty.—This question was repeatedly put to a friend of mine.

circumstances,

circumstances, fortunately stands without an example in the annals of our legislature.

After praising Mr. GREY for an act, which was properly reprobated by ninety-nine persons in every hundred, throughout the kingdom, (for you are compelled to admit that the war was entered upon with the perfect approbation of the people, though you have the *modesty* to consider all who differed in opinion on the subject from you and the small circle of your friends as *fools*, or something worse,) you proceed to comment on a passage in his Majesty's speech on the twenty-first of February, in the following year, relating to the grounds of the war. One might naturally be led to suppose, that the paper which gave you such offence, must, at least, state that the war had, as you frequently insinuate, (though you dare not openly aver it,) been undertaken for the purpose of impeding the progress of freedom in France, and of compelling the French to adopt the system of government which prevails at *Constantinople*, or the polity of the court of *Seringapatam*. Little, indeed, could one imagine, that the staunch friend of Christianity, and the determined enemy of popular excess, would feel such deep indignation at an avowed determination “ *to oppose that wild and*  
“ *destructive system of rapine, anarchy, impiety,*  
“ *and irreligion; the effects of which, as they had*  
“ *been manifested in France, furnished a dreadful*  
“ *but useful lesson to posterity.*” —But, we are told, forsooth! that this declaration “ wholly and ab-

M

“ *solutely*



“solutely precluded the return of peace !” The justice of this inference can only be admitted on the supposition that you, who drew it, were assured, that the French were resolved never to abandon that system. You go still farther and gravely assert—you are lawyer enough, though, to know that *assertion is not proof*—that this declaration directly refuted the unfounded assertion—recollect that I have supported *this* assertion by authentic *proofs* which I dare you to controvert or invalidate—“that the war had proceeded from France ;”—and showed that peace could, under no concessions of France, have been preserved.—How did it show this ?—Because “the war was to be waged to “subdue *principles* and opinions ; to *change the* “*Government*, and not to punish overt acts of “insult, or to enforce restitution.”

These are bold *assertions* of your own, wholly unwarranted by the declarations of Government ! But the whole passage exhibits a specimen of logic peculiar to yourself, and too curious to be omitted here. “If the return of peace,”—you say,—“was at the opening of the session declared to be “inadmissible, whilst the principles of her “Government continued, it follows, that the “original preservation of peace must have been “equally inadmissible, *whatever concessions might* “*have been made by France to preserve it*, since “the self-same system existed at the commence- “ment of the war, which was now pronounced to “be an insuperable obstacle to negotiation.”—

Really,

Really, Sir, you must hold the people of England in sovereign contempt, if you imagine they can be the dupes of such miserable sophistry as this!

“The war was to be waged,” as it had been, to resist hostilities commenced against us by the enemy, and an aggression wholly unprovoked on our part. It is, I know, a favourite topic with the philosophical politicians of the present day, that to wage war against principles is to commit an act of injustice of the most atrocious nature. To fight against mere *abstract* principles would indeed be an act of insanity; but to resist principles when attempted to be reduced to practice, in a manner that threatens our own safety and independence, is justifiable not only by the law of nations, but by the all-powerful plea of self-preservation. VATTTEL, speaking on this subject, says—“If, then, there be any nation of a *restless* “and *mischievous* disposition, always ready to “*injure others*, to traverse their designs, and to “RAISE DOMESTIC TROUBLES; it is not to be “doubted, that all have a right to join, in order “to repress, chastise, and put it ever after out of “its power to injure them.” That France was a nation precisely of this description, no man will be bold enough to deny. The principles proclaimed by her amounted to little less than the assertion of a right of universal legislation, and a determination to overthrow all the existing

<sup>4</sup> VATTTEL, Book 2, Chap. 4.

Governments of Europe. "*Royalty in Europe*," —said the French—"is on the point of perishing; "and the declaration of rights, placed by the "side of *thrones*, is a devouring fire which will "consume them." They took no pains to conceal the nature and extent of their principles; on the contrary, they took care to translate all their offensive decrees, which, as well as their attempts to change, *by force*, the government of neighbouring States, they stated to be the *necessary result of their principles*, into all foreign languages. The acts of aggression committed upon our Allies, and the formal disavowal of the obligation of all just treaties, were the consequence of their *principles*. It was not therefore sufficient that we should repel such aggression, that we should drive them out of the territories of our Ally, which they might re-enter whenever they chose, we had a right to expect that they should offer us a security against the renewal of those acts by disclaiming the principles on which they were founded. This was the *concession* by which the war might have been prevented. Lord GRENVILLE, as I have before observed, had expressly stated, as the condition of continued friendship, that France must show a disposition "to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandizement, and to confine herself within "her own territories, without insulting other "Governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights." She evinced no such disposition; on the contrary, she proceeded



proceeded immediately to reduce to practice the principles here complained of. But it is ridiculous to say, that if she really had made the concession thus specifically demanded, the preservation of peace would have been inadmissible.

You evidently confound the principles avowed by the Government of France, with the system of Government itself, and hence you are led to infer, that to insist on a renunciation of those principles was to demand a change in the Government, or, in other words, the destruction of the republic. This was an object which most certainly Ministers never had in view, as *the condition of peace*. They soon, indeed, had too much reason to think that peace, with any Administration, professing the principles which the French Ministry of that day professed, and on which they *acted*, would be impracticable; and that the best *means* of producing a dereliction of those principles, and, consequently, of establishing the tranquillity and safety of Europe on a permanent basis, would be the restoration of monarchy; but this they considered as a *means* of obtaining their object, not as the *object* itself.

You represent this mode of waging war against principles as “a new and fatal principle of hostility.”—The assertion is not very correct, because Vattel, as we have seen, had expressly established the principle; but if the practical application

application of it be new, whom have we to thank for it?—Those immaculate republicans who appear, in your opinion to be infallible, but who, in fact, are the first people, at least in modern times, that have rendered the assertion of such a principle of hostility necessary and unavoidable. Indeed, they were themselves fully aware that their principles must be objects of resistance to all existing Governments; and they evidently intended that they should be so; hence the President of the Convention, after the decree of the 16th had been passed in November 1792, alluding to the war which France had declared against the Emperor and the King of Prussia, observed—“PRINCIPLES ARE WAGING WAR AGAINST TYRANNY, which will fall under the blows of *philosophy*.” This was perfectly true; the disorganizing principles proclaimed by the French Government had declared, as they themselves repeatedly confessed, eternal war against *royalty*, that is, against every political institution or form of Government which differed from their own. Of course, the regular Governments were compelled in their own defence, to wage war against those principles. It was with them, not an object of choice but a matter of necessity. The principles were avowedly the active aggressors; they were the cause of hostility. Mr. Fox, indeed, whom you praise most extravagantly, apparently for no other reason than because his sentiments corresponded with your own, was pleased to represent a contest pursued on these grounds as having *no defined*

*fined nor definable object.* But he might as well tell me, that if a man threatened to take away my life, the judicial means I should adopt for securing myself against the effects of such threats, would have no *definable object*; and that, before I could have any lawful ground of action, I must wait until he had put his threats in execution.—The object, in both cases, is to obtain reparation for a past act of aggression, and security against any future act of a similar nature.

But though the British Ministers never meant to prescribe a change of the French Government as a condition of peace, I can have no wish to evade the grand question itself, but am free to maintain that, if they could not effect by any other means the destruction of those disorganizing principles, which were avowed and enforced by the persons exercising the powers of Government in France,<sup>5</sup> they had an undoubted right, according to the maxim avowed by Vattel, (whose authority Mr. Fox himself has consecrated) to exert every effort for the overthrow of the republic. This maxim indeed is evidently founded on the all-paramount principle of self-preservation, and only gives to States that right and that power which are vested in every individual by the laws of nature, confirmed by the

<sup>5</sup> It was declared by DANTON, in the Convention, that "the National Convention of France should be a Committee of Insurrection against all the Kings of Europe."



laws of society. If a fire should break out in the house of my neighbour, will it be contended that I should have no right to quench the flames, nor to remove nor destroy any combustible matter which might tend to nourish them, in order to prevent the probable destruction of my own residence? In short, to deny the right here asserted, and which Vattel properly denominates the *right of Security*,<sup>6</sup> would be to maintain the monstrous proposition that a Government can exist with safety without the means of defence.

The next motion brought forward by opposition (in Jan. 1795,) who seemed determined to suffer no one session to escape without giving to the French some grounds of encouragement, had for its object a premature recognition of the republic, which must effectually have destroyed all hope of dividing her force, by the assistance of that party in France which had invariably resisted the new Government. The motion was, of course, opposed by the Minister; but while he sought to avert the disastrous effects which it was calculated to produce, he prudently resolved that the ground of his resistance should not be open to the misrepresentations of his enemies, nor urged as a proof of his disinclination to peace. He therefore, instead of putting a direct negative on the motion, proposed an amendment to the

<sup>6</sup> Vattel, ubi supra.---See also "Objections to the Continuation of the War examined and refuted," by JOHN BOWLES, Esq. p. 67, 68.

following

following purport, which was adopted by the House :

“ That under the present circumstances, this  
 “ House feels itself called upon to declare its de-  
 “ termination firmly and steadily to support  
 “ his Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the  
 “ present just and necessary war, as affording, at  
 “ this time, the only reasonable expectation of  
 “ permanent security and peace to this country ;  
 “ and that, for the attainment of those objects,  
 “ this House relies with equal confidence on his  
 “ Majesty’s intention to employ vigorously the  
 “ force and resources of the country, *in support*  
 “ *of its essential interests ; and on the desire uniformly*  
 “ *manifested by his Majesty, to effect a pacification*  
 “ on just and honourable grounds with any Go-  
 “ vernment in France, *under whatever form*, which  
 “ shall appear capable of maintaining the accus-  
 “ tomed relations of peace and amity with other  
 “ countries.”

This positive declaration clearly establishes these facts—that the existence of a republic in France had never been considered by the British Government as a bar to peace ; that Ministers had ever been desirous to conclude a peace on just and honourable grounds ; and that the existence of *any form* of Government in France would not be regarded as an impediment to the termination of

<sup>7</sup> WOODFALL’S Parliamentary Register.

the war. In order to prevent the inference which any impartial person must naturally be led to draw from the perusal of the amendment, you, disingenuously, change the construction of the sentences, and wholly omit the words here marked in *Italics*; evidently because this solemn parliamentary avowal of the *uniform manifestation of his Majesty's desire to conclude a safe and permanent peace*, exhibits a complete contradiction of your unfounded assertions on the subject. Your interpretation of the Minister's conduct, in this instance, confuted as it is by his own positive testimony, and by indubitable facts, is too puerile and insignificant to merit a serious comment; while the RANT you pursue, in consequence of this false construction, is too ridiculous to excite any thing more than a smile. It might *tell* very well by way of appeal to the passions of a jury, or the judgment of a mob; but as an address to the good sense of the British public, it will not, believe me, answer your purpose.—Two other motions were made in the course of the two ensuing months, by Mr. GREY and Mr. Fox, which, as they were of a similar import, of course experienced a similar fate.

During these transactions in England, it might naturally be supposed, that the persons exercising the powers of Government in France had expressed a disposition to retract those aggressive principles which had occasioned the war, or, at least, had avowed some sentiments of a *pacific tendency*



*tendency* which had the effect of convincing the gentlemen in opposition that these principles were no longer, as Mr. GREY observed, “ incompatible with the safety of other States,” and which encouraged them to insist so strenuously on the immediate recognition of the French republic. How far this was the case, a few *facts* will suffice to show.

In the month of April, 1793, a decree passed the Convention, by which the punishment of death was to be inflicted on any person who should propose peace with any country, unless that country acknowledged the French republic, one and indivisible, founded on the *principles of liberty and equality*. It cannot escape observation, that the object of establishing this *sine quâ non* of peace was to extort a general acknowledgement of these democratical principles as the legitimate foundation of government, and, of necessity, a confession, that all Governments, but that of France, were founded, as the French had repeatedly insisted, on usurpation and injustice.

In the sitting of the Convention on the 20th of January, 1794, CAMBON, the French *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, said—“ Let us judge with impartiality the *principles* on which the British Government rests. I see a KING ! Good God ! a King ! *what a monster in nature !* A King, who by the very statutes is entrusted with such a plenitude of power, as must devour all the  
 N 2 “ little

"little powers which popular credulity flatters  
"itself that it is still invested with."

COUTHON, in the same sitting, proposed an oath, which was instantly taken by the Convention, "*that they would destroy all tyrants,*" alias, *Kings*. Among other means of accomplishing this purpose it was moved, "That all Kings  
"should be beheaded in effigy, and that the '*Last Judgement of Kings*' should be represented at  
"every theatre." It was also resolved—"to  
"congratulate

\* *Le Jugement dernier des Rois*, a Prophecy, in one Act, is the production of Citizen SYLVAIN MARÉCHAL, and was first performed at Paris, at the *Theatre de la République*, where, of course, it was received with the greatest applause; I say of course, because if any free Frenchman had been so free as to express any disapprobation on the occasion, there can be little doubt that he would have been instantly transferred to one of the many thousand Bastilles which cover the face of this free republic, and from thence consigned to the care of *Sancta Mater Guillotina*, as that voracious monster has been impiously denominated. The property of this piece was expressly secured to the author, in a special manner, by a decree of the Convention.

The stage was made to represent the interior of an island, in the center of which was a *Mountain* throwing out flames during the whole time of performance. In the front was a cottage, bearing this inscription—

"Il vaut mieux avoir pour voisin

"Un volcan qu'un Roi.

"Liberté — — — Egalité."

*A man had better have a volcano for his neighbour than a King.—  
Liberty—Equality.*

The nature and tendency of the sentiments contained in a piece which was sanctioned with the approbation of men who could publicly proclaim in the senate such principles as those advanced by CAMBON, COUTHON, and BARRERE, may be easily conceived.

The



“ congratulate the *Mountain* on account of the  
 “ energy displayed in the trial of the tyrant, and  
 “ to

The plot is simply this.—An *European Convention* is supposed to have been holden at Paris, which is modestly stated to be *the metropolis of Europe*, consisting of *Sans-Culottes* representatives of all the different people which Europe contains. Here the establishment of an *universal republic* is decided; and all the Monarchs are banished to the island, where they are consumed by the flames issuing from the *Mountain*.

If any member of the Loyal Associations had presumed to write a piece in which all the Kings of Europe were destroyed by the *Mountain*,\* it would certainly have been represented, by the advocates for the French in this country, as an indecorous attack upon the Government of an independent State; as a gross *calumny* upon the Ministers of that Government; and as a scandalous misrepresentation of their views and designs. But as this piece was written by a French Citizen, and was not only honoured with the decided approbation of the legislature, but was, in consequence of a formal decree enacted for the purpose, represented in every theatre in France, no man will be bold enough to deny, that it contains the sentiments and principles of the French Government, with whose professions on other occasions it perfectly corresponds, and affords the most irrefragable proof of their fixed determination to establish an universal republic in Europe on the ruins of monarchy.

Among other sentiments of a similar nature, are the following, uttered by a “French Sans-Culotte,” who is the hero of the piece:

“ Did there ever exist a nation which had morals and a King  
 “ at the same time?—Future generations! will ye pardon your  
 “ good ancestors for their excesses of degradation, stupidity,  
 “ and self-denial?” (In submitting to live under a monarchical  
 Government.) “ Nature, hasten, to complete the work of the

---

\* Every body knows, that this was the appellation assumed by the prevailing party of that day; and is still applied to the Jacobin members of the two Councils.



“ to order a *feu de joye* to be fired the very hour  
 “ when the tyrant died.”

In the month of February, 1794, BARRERE, in the name of the Committee of Public Welfare, thus addressed the Convention, on the subject of peace—“ You desire peace ;—so do the confederated Kings, but mark at what price. A diplomatic agent in a neutral State said the other day—‘ The Confederate Powers are willing provisionally to acknowledge the republic ;’—(a burst of laughter ensued ;)—well, *let us provisionally destroy all tyrannical Governments.*—“ (Loud applauses.)—The tyrants offer you peace, “ because they have neither money nor troops.—“ IF THE BRITISH PEOPLE WISH FOR PEACE, “ WHY DO THEY NOT DETACH THEMSELVES “ FROM THEIR INFERNAL GOVERNMENT ? ”—

“ Arms  
 “ Sans-Culottes ; blow, with your fiery breath, upon that refuse of society, and make them return to that state of nihility “ which they never should have quitted.

“ Inflict also the same punishment on the first of us who shall “ pronounce the word *King*, unaccompanied by those imprecations “ which the idea attached to that infamous word naturally presents “ to every republican mind.

“ For my own part, I pledge myself instantaneously to erase “ from the book of free men whoever shall, in my presence, pollute the air with any expression that can tend to give a favourable “ idea of a King, or of any other *monstrousness* of the kind. Comrades, let us all swear to do the same.

“ *The Sans-Culottes.* We swear it !—*Vive la Liberté !—Vive la Republique !*”

“ And yet these are the men who, as you say, repelled with “ indignation

“Arms and gunpowder must alone procure  
“peace!”

It is, I conceive, scarcely possible to speak more plainly; or to betray a disposition more hostile to peace, or more incompatible with the safety of other States. Let any *true Englishman* compare the conduct of the two Governments, at this period, and decide, whether your inference or mine is founded on justice and truth. I would willingly leave the matter at issue between us to the plain good sense of my countrymen—I desire no other arbiter—I look to no other judge. And though I have not, like you, the presumption to *anticipate* their verdict, I have that confidence in the goodness of my cause, and the strength of my proofs, that I shall await their sentence without fear or apprehension.

It will be no difficult matter to prove, from the principles of negotiation laid down by the French republicans themselves, that *they* would not have entered into a treaty with any other nation in a situation, and under circumstances, similar to those in which France, at this period, was placed. In the *explanation* of the Executive Council to our Ministers, quoted by yourself, it is positively stated, that “*The knowledge of the general will is the only basis of the transactions of nations with each other;*

“indignation the charge of encouraging sedition against Governments,” and whose professions on that head you maintain to have been deserving of credit!!!

“and



“and we can only treat with any Government what-  
 “ever on this principle, that such a Government is  
 “deemed the organ of the general will of the na-  
 “tion governed.” It will scarcely be contended,  
 that the citizens of the Executive Council, all  
 of whom, with a *single* exception, have since  
 perished by their own hands, or by the axe of  
 the guillotine, were “the organ of the general  
 “will” of France. Nor will it, I apprehend, be  
 urged, that ROBESPIERRE’S Committee of Public  
 Safety, or rather of Public Destruction, with the  
 Director CARNOT at its head, was the organ of  
 the general will. France, torn by contending  
 factions, had exhibited, from the summer of 1789  
 to the close of 1794, a constant series of revolu-  
 tions and commotions; *six hundred thousand* of  
 her inhabitants had perished on the plains of La  
 Vendée; *eighteen hundred and twenty* of her towns  
 and villages had been reduced to ashes; and her  
 numerous places of confinement had enclosed no  
 less than *six hundred thousand state prisoners!*—  
 Where, then, in what body of men, was the organ  
 of the general will to be discovered? It was no  
 where to be found. France, therefore, agreeably  
 to her own principles, was not in a situation to be  
 treated with by any foreign power.

No sooner, however, had the new constitution  
 of 1795 been established, the principles of which  
 it is foreign from my present purpose to discuss,

<sup>1</sup> See “Les Bandits Demasqués.”

observing



observing only, that it was ushered in by an act of tyranny, at which every true friend to freedom must revolt, though *you* do not think it worthy one single expression of censure,—than the Ministers hastened to announce to the world, that the period was arrived, when his Majesty would meet any disposition to negotiate on the part of the enemy, *with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect*, and to conclude a treaty of general peace whenever it could be effected on just and suitable terms for his Majesty and his Allies.

I should have thought that a declaration so explicit and clear would have proved satisfactory to every friend of his country. It certainly held out an *invitation* to the French to enter into a negotiation, and proclaimed a sincere desire, on the part of the British Government, to bring it to a speedy and successful termination. It did prove satisfactory to a vast majority of the Parliament, and to the great mass of the nation; but not so, it seems, to the perpetual cavillers of opposition. This measure is reprobated by you with almost as much severity as any of the preceding measures of Administration. Whatever comes from that quarter incurs your displeasure, and nothing appears to please you but the conduct of our enemies—

“ That head, or stomach, is not sure the best,

“ Which nauseates all, and nothing can digest.”

No *Englishman* could possibly have conjectured  
 O the

the ground of your displeasure, in this instance, though a French republican probably might.—You are enraged with Ministers because they only expressed a readiness to *meet* any disposition to negotiate; and because, forsooth, they did not declare their readiness to throw themselves at the feet of the Directory, and *supplicate* a peace. A man who had one spark of British spirit in his soul would have scorned to urge so base, so inglorious, so ignominious an objection! But, we are told, “that the British Government had declared the incapacity of the French Government”—I have proved the existence of that incapacity from their own general principles—and, strange to tell!—“that this obstacle still continued.”—Why? because the King, in his message, had declared it to be *removed*. Really, Sir, this is too gross an insult on the understanding of your readers to pass current even with the veriest blockhead at Beaufort Buildings or Palace Yard! It is neither marked by the point of ridicule nor the force of fact; and it wants alike the recommendation of sense, the plea of decency, and the grace of decorum.

The mode of reasoning by which you vainly attempt to support this conclusion, is not less extraordinary than the conclusion itself.

You say, that “The British Government, by the various acts of its Crown and Parliament, had interposed a positive and public obstacle to  
“negotiation,

“negotiation,” by declaring the incapacity of the French Government; but that the declaration in question “was a mere *private* communication of “the King of Great Britain to his own Parliament,” and that, *therefore*, the obstacle to a negotiation still continued. But was not the declaration of the capacity of France to negotiate made with the same degree of publicity, and precisely in the same manner, as the declaration of her incapacity had been made before? or, to speak more correctly, was it not made in a more formal, more specific, and more public manner, since the removal of the impediment was announced by a message from the Throne, whereas the existence of the obstacle was only stated, indirectly, in the course of debate? If the one may be called a *private* communication from the King to his Parliament, the other must come under the same description.. If France could not be supposed to know any thing of the latter, how could she be supposed to be acquainted with the former? Both communications were made through the same channel—that is, through the medium of Parliament, and therefore both were equally *private* or equally *public*, and France, consequently, had a right to act upon both or upon neither. If the interposition of the obstacle was public, its removal was public also; and if the removal was *private*, the interposition was private also. Either the enemy could not be supposed to know that any impediment to negotiate had existed, or she must be supposed to know



that it had been received. I do not see the possibility of an alternative. And yet, upon the validity of an objection so captious, so futile, you consent to stake the whole credit of your work; and boldly leave the matter to the decision of "every man whose reason is not disordered, "and whose heart is not corrupted."—I am not aware that my reason is disordered, and I trust, that my heart is as pure as your own; and yet to me, I protest, it appears that your objection is as *baseless* as "the fabric of a vision."—On this, however, as on other points, the public must decide between us.

The address on the message was opposed by Mr. SHERIDAN, who wished to substitute an amendment of his own, in order to make his Majesty *lament* that he had not disgraced himself by listening to the suggestions of opposition, in preference to the opinion of Parliament, and the voice of the nation. And this supplied you with a seasonable opportunity of administering a copious dose of flattery to that gentleman, whose public spirit, genius, eloquence, and wit,<sup>2</sup> form the theme of  
your

<sup>2</sup> You are particularly lavish of your commendations on the *wit* of Mr. SHERIDAN (one of the *chiefs* of your party) which, you tell us, "affords the happiest illustration of *Pope's* description of "this rare and *useful* qualification."—That poet, if my memory fail me not, says—

"A wit's a *feather*, and a chief's a rod;

"An *honest man's* the noblest work of God."

But, alas! wit with you has the precedence; and poor HONESTY  
does

your admiration, though you are totally silent on his private virtues, and on all those moral qualities of the mind, which, in the estimation of some *antiquated* writers, have been deemed essential requisites in the formation of a *patriot*.

Here, Sir, let me ask, on what maxim of equity or justice it is that, in the assertion of your general principles on the subject of peace, France is invariably exempted from their influence and operation? Upon what principle of public law, upon what plea of precedent or example, can you justify the imposition of the whole *onus pacificandi* upon the nation aggrieved? In all the speeches of your party, in all the publications of your partisans, it has been invariably insisted that England, engaged in a war of self-defence, of self-preservation, should make overtures for peace; but it never once has been suggested by any of them, that France, though the aggressor in the contest, though she literally compelled us to go to war, by declaring war against us, ought ever to evince a disposition for peace. Every topic which ingenuity could devise, or eloquence enforce, for the purpose of stimulating us to the adoption of this line of conduct, has been exhausted; but though all the arguments urged might have been employed against our enemies,

does not come in for a single particle of praise, from the first page of your pamphlet to the last, though all the members of opposition are aptly panegyricized.

with

with tenfold force, they never have been applied to them. This is a proceeding so opposite to the wise practice of our ancestors, so little consonant with the maxims of sound policy, so wholly repugnant to the principles of true patriotism, that it can only be imputed to a *motive* most disgraceful to those who could suffer themselves to be actuated by it. It is not sufficient that our Ministers have to maintain a contest unparalleled in the importance of its object, and the extent of its danger, but they must also have to encounter an opposition equally unparalleled in the nature and tendency of their exertions.

After some few weeks had elapsed, during which the French exhibited no more symptoms of a pacific disposition than they had before displayed, our Ministers, determined to prove to the whole world that *they* were willing to give effect to the sentiments which they had professed, as far as lay in their power, sent orders to Mr. WICKHAM, the British Envoy at *Basil*, to deliver a note to M. BARTHELEMI, the republican Minister, the object of which was to enquire whether or not the French Government were disposed to put an end to the war, by opening a negotiation for the conclusion of a peace on just and suitable terms? Whether, for this purpose, they would send a Minister to a general Congress? Whether they would specify such general bases of a pacification as France intended to propose? And lastly, if this mode of proceeding were objected to



to by the French Ministry, Whether or not they would point out any other mode calculated to promote the same end—a *General Peace*?

It certainly was necessary to ascertain, in the first instance, whether those persons who had hitherto talked of nothing less than the extermination of Kings, the abolition of monarchy, and the revolution of Europe, had changed their sentiments with the form of their Government, and would really *condescend* to make peace with regular establishments that had not acquiesced in their assertion of universal sovereignty. Before it was known whether they would treat or not, and there was every reason, from their past conduct, to infer that they would *not* treat, it was needless to appoint a Minister Plenipotentiary for conducting the negotiation which they might refuse to open. The questions put were plain, simple, and specific. The answer given by the Directory began by expressing some doubts as to the sincerity of our Ministers, founded on the absurd and ridiculous plea of Mr. WICKHAM not being entrusted with power to negotiate. Waving, however, all objections, the Directory proceeded to declare, that they would state specifically and openly the terms upon which they would consent to open a negotiation. These terms were, that the Combined Powers should acknowledge the right of the French Republic to retain possession of all the countries which her arms had conquered, and which it had pleased her to annex, by constitutional

tutional decrees, to her own territory; and this acknowledgement was urged as an *indispensible preliminary* to a negotiation! Any farther proceedings were of course rendered unnecessary, by this peremptory declaration, which made the conclusion of a treaty upon just and suitable terms absolutely impracticable, and set up a plea so monstrous in itself, and so fatal in its consequences, as to become a matter of serious apprehension to every power in Europe. This plea asserted nothing less than the right of prescribing laws to the world, and of opposing the provisions of the constitutional code of France to all the rules, regulations, and conventions which had hitherto been acknowledged by every civilized power. The magnitude of the concession,<sup>3</sup> though of itself an insuperable bar to negotiation, was still less objectionable than the assertion of this arbitrary and destructive principle. The subject, however, has been so amply and ably discussed, in one of the most eloquent produc-

<sup>3</sup> The French territory would, in that case, include 1. Old France as it was before the war; 2. The French colonies in the West Indies still occupied by France; 3. The isles of France and Mauritius; 4. Martinico and Tobago; 5. The whole island of St. Domingo; 6. Pondicherry, Chanderagore, Caricul, Mahé, and the other French establishments in the East Indies; 7. Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin; 8. the Principality of Montherliard, and the Bishoprick of Porentrui; 9. Savoy, Nice, and Monaco; 10. Austrian Flanders and Brabant, and all the Emperor's dominions on this side the Rhine; 11. Maestricht, Venlo, The Isle of Walkeren, &c. and Dutch Flanders; 12. The Bishoprick of Liege.



tions<sup>4</sup> which has issued from the press since the commencement of the war, that I shall pursue it no farther.

The insolent charge of *insincerity*, preferred by the Directory, would have been too contemptible to notice, had not the members of your party deigned to repeat the language of our enemies, and even to give to their frivolous objection an extent and interpretation which they themselves had never assigned to it. You affect to support its validity by a plea, the fallacy of which I have already demonstrated; *viz.* the ignorance of France as to the change of sentiment which had taken place in the British Councils, on the subject of the capacity of her Government to make and maintain treaties. Do you mean to contend that, in point of fact, this circumstance was not known to the French Ministers? You know that it was, for you know, at least you ought to know, that the King's Message, and the Parliamentary Debates on the subject, had been translated into French, and had appeared in the Parisian Journals. Besides, if it had not been known by any other means, was not a proposal to France to

<sup>4</sup> "Remarks upon the Conduct of Persons possessed of the Powers of Government in France, and of the Official Note of M. Barthelemi, dated Basil, March 26, 1796."—This pamphlet, having nothing to recommend it, but strong sense, sound judgement, able reasoning, deep observation, extensive knowledge, and elegant diction, could not be expected to vie with your tract in rapidity of circulation and extent of popularity.



treat tantamount to a formal acknowledgement of her capacity to make and maintain treaties? Most certainly it was. There are so much pitiful quibble and paltry chicane in your declamation, I cannot call it argument, on this topic, that it can scarcely be deemed worthy of serious confutation. It resembles more the captious cross-examination of a doubtful witness at the Old Bailey, than the dignified discussion of a political point by a British Senator.—After all that can be said on the subject, this will appear demonstrable to every man of common sense, that all the objections started by your party were not started by the French themselves, and that what were started by them did not prevent them from giving that specific and positive answer which it was the object of the questions to obtain. The matter, therefore, ultimately resolves itself into this point—Were the terms proposed by France as the *preliminary* to a negotiation, such as could be submitted to by England, consistently with her own political safety and commercial independence? No man has yet appeared bold enough to answer in the affirmative. The imputation of insincerity has been repelled with just indignation by those against whom it was alledged, and the attempt to negotiate produced at least this good effect—it *ascertained* the aversion of our enemy from the conclusion of a peace.

But the extraordinary attempt made by the members of opposition to corroborate and *extend* the

the objections started and *waved* by the French, was calculated to answer another purpose. In the course of the different debates on the subject of peace, the opposition endeavoured to stimulate Ministers to make some propositions to the enemy, by stating the inevitable consequence of a refusal on their part to accede to just and equitable terms, to be the union of all parties and descriptions of men in support of the war. One of the most respectable members of opposition, in point of character and property, (Mr. T. W. COKE,) had expressly said, "The experiment of trying to obtain it (peace) could do no harm, and might do much good. If it should fail, *the consequence would be uniting the heart and hand of every Englishman for a vigorous prosecution of the war.*" And the general language of the party was this—"If France refuse to treat, or if she insist upon unjust and inadmissible conditions, you will be so far from losing any point by the overture, that you will have all England unanimous, you will convert whatever opposes you at present, *you will have even ourselves for your associates and confederates.* Whatever bears the name and distinctive character of Englishmen will aid and second you in the conduct and support of a war, which, by the refusal or intemperance of France, will then have indeed become what you have hitherto only pretended, a war of justice and necessity, a war of honour and utility, a war for the liberty and independence of Europe."



After this solemn pledge to Parliament and to the nation, the only alternative left to the opposition was boldly to stand forward and maintain, that the terms stipulated by France were such as the Ministers ought to have acceded to; or to fulfil their engagement, and give their vigorous support to the war. This, I contend, was the only mode of proceeding that could be pursued without a palpable breach of honour and a flagrant violation of duty. But instead of acting with candour, manliness, and decision, they had recourse to the disgraceful quibbles and chicanery which I have described. They stooped to confirm the objection which the enemy had waved, started others which had never occurred to them; and the ambitious and encroaching spirit of the French, which, on former occasions, when the danger resulting from it was infinitely less, had roused the jealousy and excited the patriotic indignation of Mr. Fox, was now suffered to pass without censure or remark, and the pledge so solemnly given still remains to be redeemed.—The public and posterity will appreciate such conduct!

<sup>5</sup> To enter into a *critical* analysis of your work would be a task too tedious and unpleasant for me to undertake. But when such passages as the following occur, which is not unfrequently the case, I cannot always withstand the temptation of asking for an *explanation*. "The object of Mr. WICKHAM's proposition, and the "extent of his authority, were to pump Mr. BARTHELEMI: A "new title in the code of diplomacy."—*Quere—What title?*—This, Sir, might do very well in a speech, but not in a pamphlet.

The



The refusal of the Directory to open a negotiation on admissible terms, was not viewed by the people of France in the same favourable light in which the opposition in England had chosen, for obvious purposes, to consider it. The irrevocable annexation of Belgium to the territory of the republic was openly questioned, and the party who, adopting the views of the Government, insisted on the propriety of extending her frontier to the Rhine, was publicly stigmatized, as "the faction of the new limits;" while a vast majority of the nation were decidedly hostile to the disastrous project of rendering the necessity of such extension a pretext for the continuance of the war. In order to counteract these impressions, the Directory studiously propagated a report, through the medium of their official Journals, that fair and equitable propositions of peace had been made to the Combined Powers, and rejected by them. This served to keep the public mind in a state of suspense, and enabled the Government, in the interim, to pursue their own plans without molestation.

Such was the state of things, when the British Ministers, determined to remove, if possible, every ground for cavil, and even to humour the pride and arrogance of the French, so as to leave them nothing, in point of form, that could furnish them with a *pretext* for an objection, made application, through the Danish Ambassador at Paris, for a passport for a person of confidence

to be sent to France for discussing the means of promoting a general peace.—This application was treated in the most insulting manner by the Directory, and it was some time before the passport could be obtained.

On the arrival of Lord MALMESBURY at Paris, 'tis well known, he proposed to establish, in compliance with established forms, a general principle, as the basis of a negotiation. The principle he suggested was that which the French denominate *the principle of retrocessions*. It must be observed, that in the Memorial containing this proposition, his Lordship apprized the French Minister that he would be “called upon to consent to such arrangements as would satisfy the just demands of the King's Allies, and preserve the political balance of Europe.” The French Government must have been aware, that this arrangement could apply to no other object than the restitution of Belgium. They evidently were aware of it, and, therefore, they shuffled and equivocated,<sup>6</sup> and hesitated so long before they would give an explicit answer to the proposition

<sup>6</sup> This shuffling and equivocation of the Directory, which excited the contempt or indignation of all Englishmen at the time, has been renewed by you, in your comments on the negotiation; but in the course of your remarks you have not made a single attempt at elucidation of fact or novelty of argument; and the perspicuity, correctness, and elegance, which you so justly admire in Lord MALMESBURY's Letter, form a perfect contrast to the characteristic features of your own production.



of the British Minister, that the Memorial was delivered on the 24th of October, and the acknowledgement of the principle of negotiation withheld until the 27th of November. Nor would it have been given even then, as it has since appeared, had not the public voice convinced the Directory, that some caution at least was necessary in the execution of their plan for breaking off the negotiation. As, however, the principle of mutual concession was formally acknowledged, there was reason to hope that the French Government were seriously disposed to put an end to the calamities of war, by receding from those exorbitant pretensions which had operated as an impediment to a negotiation, but some few months before, and which *they knew* must prove an insuperable bar to the conclusion of a treaty.

Such certainly was the impresson, created on the public mind, both in England and France, by their conduct at this period. The delusion, however, was soon dispelled; the same inadmissible claims which had been advanced before, in reply to the Note presented by Mr. WICKHAM, were renewed; and the French constitution was again represented as paramount to the public law of Europe, and as an insurmountable obstacle to the separation of the Netherlands from the territory of France. With the same contempt of all rules and modes of proceeding invariably established in similar cases, an *Ultimatum* was peremptorily demanded at an early stage of the negotiation,



tiation, and its refusal, though sanctioned by uniform practice, and accompanied by an offer of fair discussion and full explanation, considered as a sufficient ground for an abrupt termination of the important business of pacification, and as a valid pretext for the immediate dismissal of the British Minister from the Directory of the republic.

The relative conduct of the two contracting, or rather *negotiating*, parties, forms an apt characteristic of the principles of the two Governments. *England*, intent on the faithful observance of treaties, and on the preservation of that political balance, on the maintenance whereof the safety, and indeed the existence, of many of the European States immediately depend, and which therefore has been an object of extreme solicitude to the most enlightened statesmen of all ages, cheerfully consented to make a sacrifice of *all* the important possessions which she had taken from France in the course of the war, in different parts of the globe, for the attainment of this one grand object. *France*, on the contrary, bent on the final accomplishment of those destructive projects of conquest and aggrandizement, which had impelled her to the unprovoked declaration of war, peremptorily refused to make a single sacrifice to the peace and security of Europe; and, when compelled to acknowledge that some compensation would be justly due to our Ally for the enormous loss which by a compliance with her exorbitant

exorbitant terms he must necessarily sustain, she still contrived—with a revolutionary Machiavelism peculiar to herself—to make such compensation subservient to her own schemes of universal demolition; for she proposed to indemnify the Emperor by robbing other Princes of their territories, and by a total dissolution of the Germanic constitution, which, as chief of the empire, that Prince was bound, by oath, to defend, but which France herself had secretly determined to subvert and overthrow.

You labour hard to embarrass, by forensic sophistry, a plain question, which every man is competent to decide upon. The rupture of the negotiation was the simple effect of the determination of the enemy to assert a general principle incompatible with the security of other powers, and not to forego the practical application of that principle to the conquests which she had made during the war. In other words, to maintain the right of the French republic to annex irrevocably to her own territories the possessions of any foreign Potentate which her arms might subdue; and to retain possession of Belgium, the acquisition of which would prove destructive of the balance of power, and consequently of the safety of Europe. Instead of quibbling, therefore, on those important points, it behoved you to prove, that the principle thus asserted, and the possessions thus retained, were not incompatible with the safety of Europe in general, or of England in particular.

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The first, however, you disavow, and the last you expressly declare yourself unqualified to discuss.

But notwithstanding this avowed disqualification, you still enter upon a partial view of the subject, and advance every argument which your own mind can suggest, or with which the more fertile invention of the Directory can supply you, in order to prove the existence of a necessity on the part of France to retain possession of Belgium, and consequently to justify its annexation to the republic. You say, that the sense of the danger to which France was exposed at an early part of the war from the invasions of the Allies, “now opposes the retrocession” of that country—in other words, that the determination of the French to retain Belgium arises from the conviction that its possession is necessary to secure them from the danger of foreign invasion.—But this is not the true motive, in the first place; and, in the second place, the pretext urged is fallacious and unfounded. For it is known to have been the decided opinion of Louvois, Turenne, Villars, Vauban, and other competent judges, that France was completely protected, for every purpose of *defence*, by what Vauban called her *iron-frontier*; that is, her *double* line of strong fortresses which are extended the whole length of her northern frontier. Nay, Vauban went still farther, and maintained that the possession of Brabant, far from operating as a security to France, would even diminish her means of protection. The reason which he assigns for



for this opinion is, that possessed of Brabant, France would neglect her real bulwark, and her fortresses would become secondary, instead of remaining primary, objects of her attention and care.

DE LACROIX, indeed, assigned a most curious reason in support of his proposition, *viz.* that as Belgium had been the source of all wars for two centuries past, the cession of it to France would ensure the tranquillity of Europe for two centuries to come!—So that the dangerous spirit of aggrandizement by which this aspiring nation had confessedly been actuated for two hundred years, and the resistance of which had been ever deemed a just ground of war by the European powers, is now urged as a motive for acquiescing in the complete gratification of her ambition, (at a time when she is become more dangerous than ever to the neighbouring States,) by the cession of a territory, the immense importance of which is sufficiently established by her unvaried eagerness to obtain it.

Another reason to induce the French to persist in her resolution of keeping this valuable country has been advanced by DUPONT DE NEMOURS, a member of one of the Councils.—“Belgium,”—says this strenuous advocate of the new limits—“can supply France, from the  
“mass of her ecclesiastical property, with the  
“means of discharging a considerable part of  
“her

“ her debts; and can put her in a situation to  
 “ subsist, after the war, on such contributions  
 “ as a state of peace will admit of.

“ Without Belgium, it is evident that the Go-  
 “ vernment will not be able to conciliate the  
 “ rights and interests of the public creditors and  
 “ of individual proprietors. The one would not  
 “ receive what is due to them, or the others  
 “ would be obliged to pay a great deal more than  
 “ they either could or ought to pay. Even  
 “ should they be disposed to bear the loss between  
 “ them, they would probably be reduced to a  
 “ state of incapacity insupportable to both.

“ We cannot say, even to a slave, *die*; much  
 “ less can we say so to a powerful and valiant  
 “ nation, who, notwithstanding her past errors  
 “ and efforts, is still possessed of resources which,  
 “ employed against her enemies, may produce  
 “ an incalculable effect.”

That the plunder of Belgium would be of in-  
 finite service to France,<sup>7</sup> in the exhausted state  
 of her finances, I am perfectly willing to con-  
 cede; but that she ought to be allowed to indem-

<sup>7</sup> By a parity of reasoning we should have an undoubted right  
 to retain all the possessions which we have taken from the French,  
 as there can be no doubt that they would furnish us with the  
 means of defraying a part of the expences incurred by the war.  
 And the argument is much stronger on our side, because we were  
*forced* into the war, and therefore have a *right* to indemnity.

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nify herself for the expences of a war, provoked and declared by herself, out of the spoils of those powers whom she had unjustly attacked, and by the gratification of that spirit of conquest and aggrandizement which led her to attack them, is a doctrine, to the support of which your arguments evidently tend, but which, I believe, no Englishman will be found so degenerate as openly to espouse.

But the grand motive which stimulates the rulers of France to insist so strongly on this point, is the same which influenced the invasion of the Netherlands in the winter of 1792. The rulers of that day, and their confidential agents, openly avowed their object, in the possession of Belgium, to be the *destruction of the naval power and commerce of England*; which they hoped to effect by the means I have before described. It is, indeed, most certain, that the possession of a country so truly valuable from the fertility of its soil, the extent of its population, and its advantageous situation for trade, manufactures, and commerce, as well as from its vicinity to the United Provinces, over which it would give the French an influence and authority as decisive as if they were lords of the soil, would supply them with ample means for gratifying that spirit of hatred and revenge, which ever has, and which ever will prevail, in France against Great Britain.

To acquiesce in the exorbitant pretensions of  
the



the French, would be to encourage plunder, to acknowledge the savage "*Loi du plus fort*," to sanction revolutionary principles, and to abandon those important interests which are so essentially connected with our commercial and political independence. But, exclusive of those weighty considerations, which must strongly impress the mind of every man who has a sincere regard for the welfare of his country, there is another motive for resisting the claims of our enemy, on which you do not condescend even to bestow a single thought. I mean our treaty with the Emperor, by which we have solemnly engaged to secure to him the possession of his dominions as they stood before the war. We therefore are bound, by every tie which Englishmen have hitherto hallowed and revered, not to give our assent to any dismemberment of his territories, unless the uncontrollable events of war should ultimately compel *him* to consent to such a sacrifice. *Then*, and *then only*, unless our honour is to be offered as a tribute to the ambition of the French, will it be for us to consider how far her acquiescence in the cession will, under all the circumstances of the case, be proper and expedient. But desperate indeed must be the situation which would justify an acquiescence that would place in the hands of France the most powerful means of *offence* against England.

It should not be forgotten, that the conditions of this treaty with the Emperor never incurred the  
censure

censure of your party; and that we have certainly derived from it the most serious advantages, in the diversion of that immense force of our enemy, which would otherwise, long before this, have been directed exclusively against this country; for, however anxious the Emperor might be to persevere in a contest, in which his dearest interests are involved, it would have been impossible for him to continue the war without the pecuniary assistance which he received from England. Interest therefore prescribes what honour commands.<sup>8</sup>

But, sorry am I to say, that this consideration appears to have no weight with you, and that you seem to consider the violation of a treaty as a matter of indifference. Else why repeat, with affected energy, and in letters of extraordinary size, no less than three times in little more than a page, that “the British nation is at this moment at war for Belgium?” This pitiful attempt *ad captandum vulgus*; this contemptible

<sup>8</sup> In the negotiation between England and France in 1761, when the French Minister proposed, as one of the conditions of peace, that England should forsake her Ally, the King of Prussia, Mr. PITT replied, in the true spirit of a British Minister, “I return you, Sir, as totally inadmissible, the memorial relative to the King of Prussia, as implying an attempt upon the honour of Great Britain, and the fidelity with which his Majesty will always fulfil his engagements with his Allies.” What a different language do you and your party wish to prescribe to the Minister of this day?—a language alike disgraceful to himself, and dishonourable to his country!

endeavour

endeavour to "split the ears of the groundlings," in order to render the war unpopular, by representing it as a mere contest for a tract of country not belonging to ourselves, and of the value of which you affect to be ignorant, deserves the severest reprobation. It is a low unworthy artifice, evidently calculated to mislead and inflame the minds of those who are unable to detect it. Belgium, considered in the abstract, merely as a territorial possession, without any reference to the commercial and political advantages which its possessors must acquire, or to the influence which it must have on the state of Europe, might possibly be regarded as an insufficient ground of war; but what statesman, what politician, what senator, what man of common sense, can possibly consider it in so absurd a point of view? If it were only a tract of land one league in extent, and producing a revenue not worth acceptance; if it were even like Gibraltar, a barren rock,—still, if the cession of it to our enemy would destroy the political balance of Europe, and materially affect our own interests and safety, it would constitute a lawful and justifiable reason for continuing the war, and all our efforts should be directed to enforce its restitution.

If you had paid the smallest degree of attention to this important subject, you could not have failed to notice the extreme anxiety which our most able statesmen have at all times entertained with respect to the dangers arising to Great Britain



Britain from the relative situation of the northern coast of France, and the opportunity which it affords of annoying our commerce, and facilitating the means of invasion. Hence the demolition of the port of Dunkirk was made an express stipulation in the treaty of Utrecht; and this stipulation was renewed in all subsequent treaties, until the peace of 1783; and so much importance was attached to this object by Mr. PITT, (father of the present Premier,) that in the negotiation which took place in 1763 between the two powers, that enlightened Minister absolutely rendered it the *sine qua non* of peace. In the instructions delivered to Mr. STANLEY, as the *ultimatum* of the British Cabinet, it was positively stated—  
 “Dunkirk shall be reduced to the condition in  
 “which it ought to have been placed after the treaty  
 “of Utrecht, *without which no peace can be con-*  
 “*cluded.*” Since, then, men, whose deep knowledge of the true interests of their country no one will presume to question, could regard the demolition of a single port as a matter of such high consequence, what importance must they necessarily have attached to the acquisition, by France, of such an extent of territory and of coast as she would acquire by the cession of Belgium?

You are compelled to acknowledge, that “the  
 “ascendancy of France hereafter, in the scale of  
 “Europe, *whatever may be the ultimate terms of*  
 “*general tranquillity*, must be always so very pow-

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“*erful,*

“ *erful*, from the fertility and extent of her territory, her immense population, and *the active* “ *genius of her people*, that her relation to England can never be indifferent.”—If such then would be the ascendancy of that aspiring nation, even in the event of a treaty which should limit her to the possession of her ancient territory, it follows of course, of necessity, from your own acknowledgement, that the cession of the conquered countries to France would effectually complete the destruction of the balance of power.

You censure Ministers for being influenced by the consideration of *consequences* in resisting the retention of Belgium by the French, and for disregarding consequences when urged by your party in opposition to the war: but your censure in both cases is unfounded in justice. In the first instance they have, as I have shown, the opinions of the most enlightened statesmen, in justification of their conduct; and, in the second, your statement is unfair, for they had no alternative; they were forced into the war—and therefore had the consequences you describe been as obvious as they were uncertain, they would have been obliged to incur them. But you always argue upon false *premises*, and assuming the fact that Ministers *began* the war, which is contrary to truth, proceed to draw such conclusions as answer your purpose, and then triumph in the strength

and extent of your own reason and sagacity. Both these qualities you, no doubt, think eminently displayed in the miraculous discovery that war is an evil and peace a blessing ! Though it might, I should think, have occurred to a man of *common sense*, that there are situations in which wisdom prescribes the necessity of incurring a temporary evil, and of foregoing a temporary blessing, in order to avert a lasting evil, and to secure a permanent blessing. But those writers who deal in *assertions*, find it convenient to advance general positions, which exempts them at once from the necessity of proof, and the trouble of discrimination.

From the *facts* I have adduced, which contradict all your *assertions*, it evidently results, that our Ministers adopted every means that was compatible with the honour and safety of the nation for averting hostilities; that during the period which elapsed between the declaration of war and the establishment of a new constitution in France, the state of the Government in that country was such as to preclude, according to the principles laid down by the French themselves, the possibility of negotiation, even had the enemy evinced a pacific disposition; that no sooner did the dawn of returning order appear in France, than they hastened to proclaim the removal of those difficulties which had operated as a bar to negotiation; that, shortly after, though the enemy had displayed no wish to meet the kind of invitation



invitation which their recent declaration had holden out, they adopted means for ascertaining the real disposition of the French on the subject of peace; and lastly that, notwithstanding the exorbitant pretensions advanced by the enemy, they again courted an accommodation, and even submitted to a measure, which many of the best friends of the country were disposed to consider as a degradation of her dignity, and sent an Ambassador to Paris. From the same facts it also results, that during the whole period of the war, from its declaration at the beginning of 1793, to the present day, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER MADE A SINGLE ADVANCE TOWARDS AN ACCOMMODATION; HAS NEVER BROUGHT FORWARD ONE PROPOSITION FOR THE TERMINATION OF HOSTILITIES; AND HAS NEVER EVEN EXHIBITED THE SMALLEST SYMPTOM OF A PACIFIC DISPOSITION. To whom then does the following exclamation of yours apply?—"What must be the responsibility of the rash and precipitate *authors of war*, and the *uniformly backward* negotiators of its termination?"—I leave it to a BRITISH public to decide.

How would the true British spirit of our brave ancestors, who fought and who conquered in the blood-stained fields of *Crecy* and of *Azincourt*—how would the proud souls of the gallant followers of our HENRYS and our EDWARDS—how would the indignant minds of SYDNEY and of HAMPDEN, the

the objects of *your* admiration, and the *nobler* and the *purser* spirit of the all-accomplished FALKLAND—Freedom's firmest friend—Rebellion's deadliest foe!—the constant theme of *mine*—have spurned the admonitions you suggest, and the conduct you prescribe? With what an eye would *they* have regarded a British Representative who should have presumed to arraign his country, and plead the cause of her enemy? Yes, Sir, I aver, that *you* plead the cause of France! Indeed, you was fully aware that your language and your sentiments would subject you to a similar imputation, and you therefore deemed it prudent to *anticipate* the charge; but the very words of your denial supply the proof of your guilt. You say, you do not defend the French, *because* you only *use their own arguments*! In the name of common sense let me ask, If I had engaged you, in your professional character, to defend a cause for me, in the Court of King's Bench, what arguments could I wish you to employ but such as I should use myself?—But your affirmation, as extended from your own publication to the arguments of your party, is by no means correct; for it is most certain, that some of the objections started by them were never urged by the French, until they had appeared in the English prints, in the pay of opposition, whence they were *translated* into the Parisian Journals. Of this description was the objection suggested to Mr. WICKHAM's Note, on the plea of *insincerity*, grounded on the forbearance of our Ministers formally to acknowledge the

the French republic. This objection had never occurred to the French Government, and was never used by any of their partisans, until their advocates in England had supplied them with it.

I have before had occasion to observe, that, in discussing the momentous question of the war, your attention has been confined to *one side* of it; and this is the case, too, with all your arguments on the necessity of peace. It has ever, till now, been the custom with politicians—a custom prescribed by common sense, and sanctioned by sound policy—in weighing a point of this nature to estimate *the relative strength* of the contending parties, to ascertain the extent of their *respective* resources, and *thence* to deduce the ability of *each* to continue the contest. Such is the rule of conduct which all rational statesmen must necessarily observe. But you, by some strange perversion of intellect, are led only to examine the state of this country *in abstract*, as it were, and, from a partial and unfair consideration of that object alone, venture to maintain the necessity of running headlong, like a mad lover, “into the embraces of Peace,” without bestowing a thought on the consequences of such strange precipitation. Although the population of France has been exhausted beyond all example,<sup>1</sup> and its very sources dried up—although her credit has been

<sup>1</sup> It has suffered, according to the most moderate computation, a diminution of three millions.

ruined,



ruined, her manufactures destroyed, her trade annihilated, and her navy reduced to little more than a third of its usual complement—although the Directory themselves have proclaimed their inability to pay the troops, and have recently confessed that they can only hope to maintain their armies by the plunder of foreign States: yet these are circumstances, in your apprehension, unworthy of notice; and our own situation, which exhibits a very different picture, is not to be subjected to a comparison with that of the enemy, but to a comparison, forsooth, with itself as it stood previous to the war! So that because a war, however just, necessary, or unavoidable, has been productive of expence and calamities, as every war necessarily must be, it must, for that reason, be terminated, and any sacrifice be made which an ambitious and implacable enemy may choose to exact. The writer, whose arguments have an evident tendency to produce an effect so directly subversive of every known rule of action, in public or in private life, must, I think, write not for the *people*, but for the *populace*; and must, when employed in the composition of his work, be tempted to exclaim—

“J’ecris en insensé mais J’ecris pour des fous.”

In short, this is precisely the mode of reasoning which the rulers of France wish to be adopted by every regular Government, because it would enable them ultimately to accomplish all their schemes of conquest and aggrandizement, and to effect

effect the revolution of Europe. They have only to proclaim their resolution to embark the capital and the whole population of their country in the contest, and not to make peace until these shall be exhausted, or a compliance with their terms, however exorbitant, obtained; and, if your principle be once admitted, their success becomes infallible, and all Europe must be subjected to their yoke. Such a termination to the first, would inevitably operate as an inducement to the commencement of a second, contest; the prevalence of the same principle with their opponents would diminish the means of resistance; and the establishment of an universal republic, on the ruins not of monarchy alone, but of civil liberty and property, would cease to appear chimerical.

The mind can scarcely stoop to combat, with serious argument, a position so preposterous, and the imagination can supply but one plausible conjecture as to your motive for advancing it. You may, perhaps, have accustomed yourself to look forward, with delight, to the happy period, when the French, profiting by the hints which your party have frequently suggested, shall improve on the arrogance of their past pretensions, and declare, as a *sine quâ non* of peace, their determination to prescribe to our insulted Sovereign an Administration of *their own*. Then your pretensions might be urged with some degree of validity; you might safely say, that you had never questioned the justice and policy of the French

French revolution—that you had invariably maintained, that the English had been the aggressors in the war, and that you had not once suggested the idea that the French were unwilling to terminate, or unable to continue, it. Your plea would, no doubt, be admitted; and the high office of Attorney General, or Lord Chancellor, be conferred on you by the mandate of Citizen CARNOT or REWBELL, and with no other opposition than that of the King and People of England!

You have drawn a flattering picture—the offspring of your own fertile imagination—of the state of the nation, such as your wisdom supposes it would have been, if we had tamely submitted to all the injuries and insults of the Jacobin Ministers of France, and avoided a war by the base sacrifice of our honour. But this picture is as false as 'tis flattering; for if we had connived at the numerous acts of aggression committed by our enemy, the inevitable consequence of such pusillanimous conduct would have been a revolution in this country, effected by the means already devised and settled between the factious clubs in England and the Government of France—a revolution founded on the same principles as the French revolution, and *necessarily* productive of the total ruin of our trade—the destruction of our credit—the violation of all property public and private, inherited or acquired—and the absolute and entire subversion of our constitution.

—Such, *I* contend, would have been the effects



of that degrading and pernicious system which you would have adopted, had the helm of the state been confided to your hands. And I think I have already shown sufficient grounds for my opinion, in the documents I have exhibited declaratory of the relative dispositions of the usurpers of France and the disaffected in England at that critical period—documents which might easily be enlarged and multiplied. Admitting, then, our situation to be as gloomy and disastrous as you represent it—which I never can admit but for the sake of argument—still the difficulties we have to encounter are insignificant, in point of magnitude and extent, when compared with the horrors we have averted; and all the sacrifices which we have made, or may yet be compelled to make, are but as dust in the balance, when opposed to the preservation of our laws and constitution, our civil and religious establishments, our commercial and political independence.

On one point only our opinions appear to accord—on the necessity of establishing a peace, whenever it can be established, on a *permanent* basis.<sup>1</sup> But a peace, like a building, to acquire permanency, must be deliberately executed, not hastily patched up;—must be founded on a rock, not erected on the sand. Can such a peace be obtained by the observance of that line of conduct which you and your party pursue? Is that desirable object likely to be secured by exaggerating

<sup>1</sup> Page 125.

to the world our difficulties and distress; by proclaiming to the enemy that our finances are deranged; that “the destruction of Great Britain “is nearly accomplished;”<sup>2</sup> that the continuance of the war must “break our credit and “*dissolve our Government;*”<sup>3</sup> and must make us pass “through bankruptcy into the jaws of revolution?”<sup>4</sup> Must these declarations appear to the eye of common sense as invitations to peace or incitements to war? In what light would such conduct be considered in the common transactions of private life? If I were anxious to purchase any particular article, what should I think of the friend who would apprise the vendor of my anxiety, and assure him that I was determined to have it, *coute qui coute*—nay, that I absolutely *must* have it, for that it was necessary to my *existence*? Should I be authorized to consider that friend as desirous to serve the purchaser, or as solicitous to promote the interests of the vendor?—Let any man of plain sense give a plain answer to this plain question; and that answer will enable him to appreciate the conduct of your party. The two cases are strictly analogous, and however sophistry may labour to puzzle, or artifice seek to obscure, I defy the ingenuity of man to establish a difference between them. I am, therefore, warranted in maintaining, that from the first dawn of a rupture with France to the present day, the conduct of opposition has had an invariable tendency to

<sup>2</sup> Page 124.<sup>3</sup> Page 113.<sup>4</sup> Page 125.

inspirit our enemies, and to encourage them to persevere in their hostile designs upon this country in particular, and upon the safety of Europe in general,

You admit the difficulty of concluding a peace, but you prescribe, as the means of removing all obstacles to its conclusion, and indeed as a panacea for all the diseases of the body politic, *a change of Ministers.*<sup>3</sup> On this *delicate* topic, the declarations of your party have so frequently varied, that it has been no easy matter to collect, from their own confessions, their sentiments on the subject. Lord LAUDERDALE, with more political honesty than his associates in general have displayed, candidly avowed two years ago, that the acquisition of place and power was the object of the party. But he was, unfortunately, doomed to witness a *contrary* declaration in the Upper House from the Earl of GUILDFORD, which he did not deem it prudent to notice; and the manner in which the charge was repelled, in the Lower House, by Mr. Fox, still left the matter in doubt. The last gentleman, however, has of late given a different complexion to the business; for he has insisted on the necessity of dismissing the present Ministers,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Here again you exempt the French from the operation of a general principle; for though the necessity of a change of Ministers be supported on the plea that the same men who have carried on a war can never make a peace, yet you do not seem to think it at all necessary that M. DE LACROIX and his associates should be dismissed from the Government of France.

and



and yet has avowed his disinclination to come into office himself. But if the existing Administration were to *go out*, and the Opposition were determined not to *come in*, it results, of necessity, that the kingdom would be left without a Government, and the nation be plunged into that state of anarchy which usually precedes a revolution. Now as I cannot suspect Mr. Fox of having it in contemplation to produce such serious disasters, I must consider his conduct on this occasion as a mere maidenly coyness; though "Thus to coo it, with one who knows *him* too," is puerile; and that he only affects to shun, while he actually courts, the embraces of power. But on what terms will this gentleman and his associates condescend to take upon themselves the burden of the state?—Mr. Fox has told us on what terms—On an express retraction, by the Parliament and by the nation, of the principles on which the war was begun, and which have been acted upon during its continuance!<sup>6</sup>

Is there a man of honour in the kingdom whose mind does not revolt at such a monstrous proposition? Mr. Fox outstrips the arrogance of our enemy, when he demands the sacrifice of our principles as the price of his services. Force, indeed, may compel a State to abandon the object of its pursuit, however laudable it may be; but there exists no human power that can oblige

<sup>6</sup> See WOODFALL'S Parliamentary Reports for 1795.

it to declare *that* to be unjust and unnecessary, which it had formally and solemnly proclaimed; by the voice of its legislature, to be sanctioned by justice and enforced by necessity. The retraction thus imperiously prescribed is nothing less than a total dereliction of every principle that establishes confidence among men, and dignifies the proceedings of independent powers; and should Mr. Fox persevere in a declaration so insulting to the country, a great majority of the nation will doubtless join in the wish that he may pass the remainder of his life in the service of opposition.

But, waving this objection, let me ask from what known principle of reason you infer, that men whom our enemies are anxious to raise into power, whose efforts have invariably tended to establish the justice of *their* principles, will be more likely to make such a peace as will be consistent with the honour, the prosperity, and the safety of *this country*, than those Ministers who have constantly resisted the dangerous principles and exorbitant pretensions of our foes? In the case of an arbitration between individuals, would either of the parties select for his arbiter a man who had regularly espoused the cause of his adversary, and had justified all his proceedings on the very point in dispute? If he did act so preposterously, the world would undoubtedly be justified in questioning the sanity of his intellects. And why the same principle should not govern nations

nations as influence individuals, in similar proceedings, I am wholly unable to comprehend.

Admitting, however, by way of argument, that all the persons which compose the present administration, together with a vast majority of the nation, were willing to submit to a retraction of principles, and that their opponents were as likely as themselves to make an honourable peace, are there no other grounds of objection to an administration composed as such an administration necessarily must be? This, Sir, is no time to temporize, to speak *half-truths*, and to sacrifice the essential interests of the country to a false and dangerous liberality. *Fiat Justitia ruat cælum.*—Let Truth boldly assert her sway in her utmost plenitude of power and integrity of Empire! Let the duties of morality be supported with at least as much energy as the cause of faction, or “the holy right of insurrection.”

I have already asserted the privilege of investigating the private characters of public men, so far as they may reasonably be supposed to have an influence on their public conduct; and I have stated the reasons on which that privilege is grounded.<sup>7</sup> If I be deceived either in the as-

<sup>7</sup> It was, doubtless, for these, or for similar reasons, that a modern critic was induced to make the following declaration, to the wisdom and justice of which I heartily subscribe—“WE PLACE NO CONFIDENCE IN AN IMMORAL MAN, WHO DEFENDS THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY.” *Monthly Review, New Series*, Vol. IX. p. 141.



section of the privilege itself, or in the inferences which it may lead me to draw, I am open to conviction; but that conviction must be produced by reason, not by declamation; by proof, not by assertion. It is a point in my opinion, highly important to the well-being of society, and therefore I wish to see it fairly and fully discussed. But whoever undertakes the discussion should recollect that it is not a question of *party*, that it involves considerations of much greater moment than the defeat of one set of men or the triumph of another, and that it embraces objects the interest of which is not merely confined to the present age, but extends to all future generations!—

Convinced as I am of the existence and necessity of such a privilege, I shall proceed to ask you, without farther ceremony, whether, among the members or supporters of your party, there exists a man who, having squandered away, in scenes of dissipation and debauchery, a patrimony, not very honestly acquired, and divided his youthful hours between the turf and the gaming-table, is now reduced to the degrading necessity of subsisting on the eleemosynary contributions of his friends, and, as if resolved to be consistent in profligacy alone, submit to pass the remnant of his life in the arms of venal beauty? Whether there exists, in the same contracted circle, any individual, whose life exhibits a constant violation of every moral and social duty; who, early rejected by the im-  
partial

partial voice of a judicious parent, and enriched by no patrimonial inheritance, has neglected to devote the liberal endowments of nature to the acquisition of an honest maintenance; yet scruples not to riot in every species of luxury, without the means to support or even the taste to enjoy it; who purchases estates when he cannot pay his debts; who, in his houses, his equipages, his horses, and his servants, displays the splendour of extreme wealth, while the public prints proclaim his inability to satisfy the trifling demands of an honest tradesman; and who has even been known to resist the lawful claims of the widow and the orphan, while he has appropriated the property of others to the unconstitutional purpose of electioneering corruption?—Whether there also exists any person who considers his seat in Parliament as a mere security against a jail, and whose dishonest practices expose him to the imputation of fraud and imposture?—or any other whose low habits and vicious pursuits render him an unfit inmate for any place of resort more respectable than a pot-house or a tavern,<sup>6</sup> and who is indebted for a subsistence to the wages of prostitution?—If, Sir, your party be disgraced by associates of this description, let me ask whether they be fit persons to be entrusted with any office of importance in the State?—Suppose one of the few men of property which the party contains, the Duke of Bedford, or Northumberland, for instance, was in want of a steward, and you, or Mr. Fox, or Mr. **SHERIDAN**, was to undertake to recommend a person

<sup>6</sup> “Here’s a tun of midnight-work to come,

“Og from a *treason-tavern* reeling home.”

**DRYDEN.**



to that situation, do you not imagine that something like the following dialogue would ensue?—

“What are this man’s qualifications?” “He possesses every talent which your Grace would desire.” “But his character?” “Oh! his mind exhibits a happy union of public spirit and genius.”—“But his honesty?”—“A superior and sublime eloquence, the force of sound reasoning, and the happiest command of wit.” “But what are his moral qualities?” “Oh! they consist in the mighty powers of his capacious mind.”—“Will those powers secure me against the danger of peculation or the disgrace of immorality? In short, what has been his past life, what the management of his own concerns?”—“Why to be sure, he has spent his paternal income, is still a prodigal and a spendthrift, never pays his debts, is irregular in his habits, vicious in his pursuits, addicted to gaming, keeps a mistress, and—” “Enough, enough, talents thus accompanied lose their efficacy, or only remain powerful in the means of corruption; the man who disgracefully squanders away his own estate is not likely to be a prudent manager of mine; I can place no reliance on the honesty of a gamester; and I will not risk the contamination of my family by the introduction of a profligate.” This evidently would be the language of every man of sense; and, why the same bad qualities which

“The loving his character of wit is a bad reason for entrusting him with the finances.” *Institution of a Prince*. Vol. II. C. 17.



exclude an individual from the service of a subject should not operate as an exclusion from the service of his Sovereign, it would be difficult to prove. It will scarcely be contended that, in the choice of his servants, the Sovereign should be debarred that privilege of rejection, on the ground of immorality, which is fully exercised by every one of his subjects; nor will you, I apprehend, be disposed to maintain, that a Monarch who sets a glorious example of virtue to the nation can submit with indifference to an intercourse with vice. Discrimination of *character* is one of the most efficacious incitements to good actions; if rewards be indiscriminately bestowed on the good and the bad,<sup>8</sup> the cause of morality is essentially injured, and the best security of a state materially weakened. "Every man is able to form a just  
 "idea of the happiness of a nation, where all the  
 "strength and authority are granted to virtue, and  
 "all the threats and chastisements confined to  
 "vice." And it is equally easy to appreciate the misery of a country in which an opposite line of conduct is observed.

These observations Sir, are not the effusions of party spirit; the suggestions of private malice; nor the dictates of personal envy: they result from an attentive consideration of what appears to me to be established and important truths; they

<sup>8</sup> Prodest bonos esse: *his honores; his sacerdotia; his provincias* offers. *Paneg. Traj.* p. 128.

<sup>9</sup> "Institution of a Prince," Vol. II. C. 17. p. 19.

apply, indeed, individually; but the occasion which extorts justifies the application.

The gross and fulsome adulation which you so bounteously bestow on Mr. Fox, sets the imputed fervility of modern courtiers at defiance, and even exceeds what history records of the obsequious flattery of the attendants of Canute ! Without investigating

It is an invariable practice with the advocates for republicanism and democracy to represent flattery and corruption as the exclusive offspring of monarchical establishments, and as confined within the circumscribed limits of a Court. But the annals of the democratic-republic, or republican-democracy, of regenerated France exhibit some specimens of adulation which can scarcely be equalled; and which prove that the followers of the Gallic demagogue surpassed the courtiers of the Danish King.—The following letters to ROBESPIERE, will suffice to demonstrate the truth of my assertion.

*" 23d Prairial, 2d year of the French Republic,  
One and Indivisible.*

" Do thou, who enlightenest the universe by thy writings, strike  
" terror into the tyrants and encourage the hearts of all people;  
" thou fillest the world with thy fame; thy principles are those of  
" nature; thy language that of humanity; thou restorest man to  
" his native dignity, and, fertile creator, thou regeneratest the  
" human species upon earth; thy genius and thy wise policy have  
" been the survivors of liberty; thou leadeest the French, by the  
" virtues of thy heart and the empire of thy reason, to conquer  
" or die for liberty and virtue; and thou teacheest France, erst so  
" proud and lofty, to adore equality. Be careful of your health,  
" for our happiness and our glory; this is the prayer of my heart,  
" which is pure as thine own.

" J. P. BESSON."

Another :

" Sage legislator,  
" The country, nature, and the divinity, owe you a triple crown,  
" and

vestigating the polluted source of this nauseous stream, which, in its impetuous course, breaks down the dykes of reason and the mounds of truth ; without seeking to ascertain whether it has its origin in that *egotistical* spirit, which praises the glass that reflects its own image, and extols in others the qualities or opinions it admires in itself ; I shall strip this idol of the tinsel trappings in which your prejudice or your vanity has arrayed him ; hold him up in all his natural deformity, and point out the defects which lead me to arraign the wisdom of your choice, and to impeach the soundness of your judgement.

The opinions which this gentleman announced at an early period of the French revolution, and his conduct on the question of the war which its founders determined to wage against the regular establishments of Europe, have been particularly

“ and I pay a just tribute in offering you the fruits which I have reaped from the exercise of your principles.—

“ Pxx, *Engineer.*”

“ 20th Floreal, 2d year.”

Another :

“ The esteem which I entertained for you during the sittings of the Constituent Assembly, induced me to place you in the heavens by the side of Andromeda, in the plan of a *federal monument*, with which I proposed to immortalize our revolution.”

These letters are extracted from an official report by COURTOIS, from the Committee appointed to examine the papers seized, after the death of *Robespierre*, at his house, and at the houses of his accomplices. This report contains many more letters of the same kind.

selected



selected as objects which entitle him to the applause and admiration of his country; and if implicit credit were to be given to his *patriotic parasites*, Solomon himself was inferior to him in wisdom, and Isaiah in the spirit of prophecy. You dwell, with such enthusiastic rapture, on the accomplishment of his predictions, on the fatal consequences of the war, as to justify a suspicion that the contemplation of the melancholy scene excites in your bosom other sensations than those of disappointment and grief. But let us submit this boasted prophecy to the crucible of common sense, and see whether the dross will not prevail over the ore. The two declarations, by which the wisdom of Mr. Fox was most particularly signalized in the eyes of his partisans, at the period in question, were these—that the French revolution was a stupendous monument of human happiness and human wisdom; and that the war would inevitably be productive of ruin to the Allies, and of all those disastrous consequences which he and you have represented in such strong and exaggerated terms.

These were the two grand points on which his claim to political foresight and sagacity, as applicable to the affairs of France, was founded. But, Sir, did it never occur to you, that these boasted declarations were wholly incompatible with each other? If Mr. Fox really foresaw the consequences which he predicted, he must also have foreseen the *means* which produced them, and by which

which *alone* they could have been produced ; he must have been aware, that the rulers of France would have committed those horrid acts of tyranny and oppression, unexampled in the annals of the civilized world ! which gave them the disposal of the whole property and population of the country, and enabled them, by the operation of force, and the influence of terror, to raise and maintain armies, unequalled in numbers since the days of Xerxes. If he *were not* aware of this, his prediction must be considered as the mere rant of party—as an ebullition of that spirit which leads the members of opposition *invariably* to foretell the most dreadful consequences from *every* measure proposed by Ministers. If, by the effect of chance, or by any of those fortuitous occurrences which frequently arise to defeat even the wisest of human projects, such anticipation be once realized, their political foresight is loudly proclaimed ; but if, as most usually happens, their predictions are falsified by the event, their temerity is screened by the veil of oblivion, and the frequency of the circumstance precludes the necessity of exposure. But if Mr. Fox *were* aware of the measures which produced the consequences he predicted, the “ stupendous monument of “ human happiness and human wisdom,” which he so pompously described, must have been a creature of imagination—the offspring of fraud—the child of imposture. One of the two pictures must have been a forgery. If he believed that the revolution would produce the happiness of  
France,

France, he could not foresee those effects which nothing but the *misery* of France could have produced; and if he foresaw the consequences of the war, he could not believe his portrait of the revolution to be a true likeness.

Having already commented on the conduct of opposition during the war; having shown its tendency to relax the operations of the Executive Government of the country, and to invigorate the exertions of our enemy; a considerable share of that censure which, in my opinion, attaches to it, must, of course, apply to Mr. Fox, who, necessarily, from the pre-eminence of his talents, and from his situation, bore a leading and distinguished part in it.

If extensive abilities formed the sum total of the qualifications requisite for the formation of an able and upright Minister, Mr. Fox would undoubtedly be a proper person to steer the vessel of State. But political talents unaccompanied by political integrity give no claim to promotion; and never did a public character exist whose life exhibited such a scene of political profligacy as that of your idol. If the annals of the country did not record the facts, posterity would scarcely believe that the man whose public spirit and whose public virtue had been selected by his friends, as the theme of an adulation little short of idolatry, had stood self-convicted of the most scandalous dereliction of principle, and devoted *by himself* to public infamy! This, Sir, is not vain declamation;



tion; it is not the invention of malice; nor the fiction of party.—But plain substantial truth, founded on documents, the authenticity of which no one will presume to question.

By a reference to the parliamentary debates, during the unfortunate period of the war between the American colonies, and the parent State, you will find, that Mr. Fox, on the 26th of October 1775, stigmatized the Minister of that day, Lord NORTH, as *an enemy to freedom*—that on the 8th of March, 1779, he reprobated him as *a fool or a traitor*—and that, on the 13th of May following, he held him up to the contempt and indignation of the world as *a compound of pride, vice, and folly*, and as a criminal *that demanded the axe*. Viewing his political enemy in this light, it was certainly very natural for Mr. Fox to shun him as a pestilence, to avoid all kind of contact or connection with him, and also to make those public declarations of abhorrence which he did make on various occasions, and at different periods. On the 26th of November, 1778, Mr. Fox declared *he could never act with Lord North with justice to his country*. On the 22d of June, in the following year, he avowed himself *shocked* at the idea that any alliance could possibly subsist between him and his opponent—“*The idea was too monstrous to be admitted for a moment!* GENTLEMEN MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN THEIR PRINCIPLES, AND HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR HONOUR, *before they could have approached the threshold of an alliance so* U “*abominable,*

*“ abominable, so scandalous, and so disgraceful.”* Persevering in these sentiments, he again declared, on the 4th of March, 1782, when the idea of a coalition of parties had been suggested, *“ That he did not mean to have any connection with Ministers; from the moment when he should make any terms with one of them, he would rest satisfied to be called THE MOST INFAMOUS OF MANKIND!!!”* He could not for an instant think of a coalition with men, who, in every public and private transaction, as Ministers, had shown themselves void of every principle of honour or honesty: in the hands of such men he would not trust his honour for a minute!!!” The sequel is known—Mr. Fox did coalesce with the man whom he had declared to be an enemy to freedom, a fool, or a traitor—a compound of pride, vice, and folly, and a criminal deserving of the axe! He did make terms with the man whom he stated to be devoid of every principle of honour and honesty; and therefore he stands recorded by himself—THE MOST INFAMOUS OF MANKIND!

This, Sir, is no strained inference, no forced deduction—it is a plain, natural, and unavoidable consequence, which not only *may*, but which absolutely *must*, be drawn by every man who considers the facts. The declarations I have noticed were not unguarded expressions uttered in the heat of debate—not the ebullitions of passion—not the effects of momentary rage; they resulted from the deliberate conviction of a mind, able to discriminate

minate and competent to judge; they were repeated at different periods, and were perfectly consistent with the general tenor of Mr. Fox's speeches and conduct in Parliament, during a term of seven years. They therefore constitute a body of evidence the most satisfactory and decisive, and such as will enable posterity to form a just estimate of his public character.

These documents you can neither obscure by sophistry, nor invalidate by assertion. You may extol, you may panegyryze, you may flatter; but still the force and efficacy of these will remain undiminished—

“Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,

“Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud—

“Repair thy wit——”

Farther traces of the same dereliction of principle, on points of great political importance, may be discovered by an attentive perusal of the debates of Parliament from the year 1772 to the present day. This is particularly remarkable in all the discussions relative to the East India Company, in which Mr. Fox will be found at one time to have considered their charter as a sanction to monopoly, which could not be too speedily abolished; and, at another, as private property, which ought to be holden sacred, and the infringement of which would be little less than a robbery.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See the debates on this subject in December, 1772—March, 1773—April, May, and June, 1781—and April, 1782.



It is equally visible in his opinion on the important question, how far a representative is bound to comply with the instructions of his constituents. On this topic he will be found at one time reminding the members of the House, that they were "insignificant in themselves, and derived their importance from the appointment of their constituents;" that it was their "duty to conform to the sentiments, and, in some degree, to the prejudices, of the people;" that, "in their legislative capacity, the wishes of the people ought to be their grand rule of conduct;" and that it was "the duty of a member to act agreeable to the notions and instructions of his constituents."<sup>3</sup> At another time,<sup>4</sup> he will be found declaring, that "he should be compelled to speak confessedly against the opinions of a very respectable part of his constituents; but it was a doctrine he had *uniformly* held, both in Westminster Hall and Covent Garden, that in that House he was to speak *his own* sentiments; if they coincided with those of his constituents, he should indeed be the more happy," &c.—He will be seen in one instance justifying the influence of the Crown,<sup>5</sup> as necessary to the existence of the government of a great country, and in various others representing it as the source of every political evil.

This is the mere outline of a picture, which

<sup>3</sup> See the Debate on the 8th of February, 1780.

<sup>4</sup> On the 11th of June, 1783. <sup>5</sup> July 4. 1783.

might be easily filled up with traits of equal strength and deformity; but the task is too disgusting to pursue. Indeed the conduct of Mr. Fox, since the war with France, has been already delineated by such a masterly hand, that it would be the height of presumption in me to follow such a predecessor on the same ground. Without seeking to diminish, in the smallest degree, the odium attached to the infidelity that produced the publication to which I allude, I cannot but say, that I consider its production as a fortunate circumstance for the public, who will now be enabled to appreciate some parts of Mr. Fox's conduct which had not before been exhibited in a proper light. One of the topics only which are there discussed shall I venture to touch upon.

Every body must recollect, that when a difference subsisted, in the spring of 1792, between the Courts of St. James's and Petersburg, Mr. FAWKENER was sent to the Empress of Russia to enforce certain demands, a compliance with which the Government of this country deemed necessary to remove the ground of dispute. While Mr. FAWKENER was at Petersburg, Mr. ADAIR, a young man related, I believe, to Mr. Fox, repaired thither; and he was stated, by public report, to have been sent by Mr. Fox, in his political capacity, as leader of opposition, though, as it has been since said, without the approbation or knowledge of his party, for the purpose of frustrating the authorized Minister of the Crown in

In some of the objects of his negotiation. If this were really the case, which I have not the means of ascertaining, there cannot be a doubt, that it was a most daring and unconstitutional proceeding, and such as richly deserved the appellation it has received of—"A HIGH TREASONABLE MISDEMEANOR."

Mr. ADAIR, conceiving the charge to convey an implication on *him*, sent a letter to a morning print, denying it in general terms, but without entering into those particulars which the nature of the accusation seemed so imperiously to require. By this appeal to the public, through such a channel, this gentleman certainly rendered the business a fair subject of public discussion, even if it had not been so before, justified the comments which any individual might feel disposed or qualified to offer, and, in some degree, bound himself to answer any observations which the public might consider as important, and relevant to the charge preferred.

Mr. ADAIR's letter produced an answer from a political writer, who had formerly stated the circumstance, in justification of his own conduct; and on the 23d of February, the following letter appeared in a respectable morning paper:

"I have lately read, in the public papers, a  
 "very singular denial, from the pen of Mr.  
 "ADAIR, of several circumstances, stated by  
 "Mr. BURKE, with respect to a supposed mission  
 "to St. Petersburg, upon the subject of the  
 "Russian



“ Russian armament. The particular situation in  
 “ which I was then placed, gave me an opportunity  
 “ of becoming better acquainted with the circum-  
 “ stances of that mission than perhaps any other  
 “ individual, Mr. ADAIR himself excepted. It  
 “ was certainly not my intention to bring forward  
 “ to public view what I know upon that subject :  
 “ but the implied attack, in Mr. ADAIR’s letter,  
 “ upon the veracity of Mr. BURKE, (whose infor-  
 “ mation seems to me to have been perfectly ac-  
 “ curate,) has induced me to venture to submit  
 “ one or two questions to Mr. A. to which, if he  
 “ cannot give satisfactory answers, neither his  
 “ innocence, perhaps, nor that of his employer,  
 “ may appear to be so pure and unfulled in the  
 “ eyes of the public.

“ Had not Mr. A. frequent private interviews  
 “ with Baron de BUHLER, Prince POTESKIN’S  
 “ Secretary, at the house of Baron STROGONOF ?

“ Did not the subjects discussed at those inter-  
 “ views relate to the negotiation with which Mr.  
 “ FAWKENER was charged ?

“ Mr. ADAIR, perhaps, does not know, that what  
 “ Baron BUHLER had to represent to the Prince,  
 “ was generally committed to writing, and deli-  
 “ vered as a *rapport*, that it might be sent to the  
 “ Empress, if necessary. He perhaps does not  
 “ know, that the Prince was very negligent with  
 “ respect to papers of that sort, and that his Aid-  
 “ de-Camp

“ de-Camps were accustomed to read them as  
 “ they lay on his table; that the writer of this  
 “ letter had access to the Prince’s Chancery, as  
 “ well as his private rooms; that when the Prince  
 “ read these *rappports*, he generally put them into  
 “ the hands of his Aid-de-Camps, who were in  
 “ waiting, to be destroyed; but they were often  
 “ preserved, from motives of curiosity. What  
 “ would Mr. A. say, if any of these were pro-  
 “ duced?

“ Is Mr. ADAIR aware, that Prince POTEKIN  
 “ conversed confidentially with the writer of this  
 “ letter upon the subject of what the Prince called  
 “ his extraordinary mission?

“ How came it to pass, that Mr. ADAIR was  
 “ received by the Empress with such uncommon  
 “ marks of distinction as never were shown to any  
 “ simple traveller who visited her Court?

“ Did not Mr. ADAIR, on taking leave, receive  
 “ *exactly* the same present from the Empress as Mi-  
 “ nisters of the second rank always receive on the  
 “ like occasions?

“ That Mr. A. cannot truly answer these ques-  
 “ tions without criminating himself, I am fully  
 “ convinced. That he may shelter himself, un-  
 “ der the pretext of not answering anonymous  
 “ letters, is extremely probable. Were the matter  
 “ brought forward more publicly, I could feel no  
 “ objection

“ objection to offer a more open testimony ; and  
 “ I can venture to assure Mr. ADAIR, that I know  
 “ more upon this subject than I have yet stated,  
 “ which future circumstances may induce me  
 “ to discover. It may be recollected, that the  
 “ strictures of JUNIUS were not the less founded,  
 “ or the less true, because the author did not dis-  
 “ close his name.

“ I am, &c.

“ ARCTICUS.”

This letter is evidently written by a person perfectly acquainted with most of the circumstances attending this mysterious transaction. The questions it contains are apposite and well put, and the facts which it states are clear, positive, and direct. Mr. ADAIR, however, has not deemed it expedient to reply, and has observed a profound silence on the subject. This is the more extraordinary, as he himself selected a newspaper as the channel of his communication to the public ; and therefore he can have no reasonable ground of objection to a controversy which he has provoked, and in a field which he has chosen. It may be urged that the letter is anonymous, and therefore undeserving of notice ; but the writer professes his readiness to *give a more open testimony*, if the matter were brought forward more publicly. It rests with Mr. ADAIR, then, to call for this testimony ; and the public have an undoubted right to expect a full explanation of a fact so extraordinary in itself, and so dangerous in its consequences.



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 “ they lay on his table; that the writer of this  
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 “ well as his private rooms; that when the Prince  
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quences. That gentleman should recollect, too, that men, his equals in character, his superiors in rank and ability, have not disdained to enter into a newspaper controversy, with *anonymous* adversaries. It is the nature of the facts themselves, and the manner in which they are urged, and not the medium through which they are communicated, that justify silence, or give a sanction to reply. Both the substance and style of the letter of ARCTICUS are such as entitle it to notice; and the impression which must be left on the public mind by leaving it unnoticed, will certainly not be favourable to Mr. Fox.

Among the numerous political delinquencies of your idol, I cannot but reckon his opposition to those salutary bills which were calculated to preserve the life of our Sovereign, and the peace of society, from the attacks of a desperate banditti, associated for the purpose of introducing French anarchy into the bosom of their country. The means by which that opposition was conducted favoured more of faction than of patriotism. The appeal from the wisdom of the senate to the passions of a mob, and the reduction of resistance to established law to a mere question of *prudence*, are acts which signalize the demagogue, but disgrace the patriot. Though all his assertions as to the tendency of those acts have been completely falsified—though not one act of oppression can be stated to have resulted from them—and though the machinations of the disaffected, which they have



have hitherto rendered impotent and innoxious, are still directed to the production of discontent, and the fuscitation of revolt ;<sup>6</sup> Mr. Fox does not scruple

<sup>6</sup> In proof of my assertion I need only cite the following hand-bill, which fell into my hands the other day, while I was on a visit to a friend in Leicestershire ; and which has been industriously circulated among the manufacturers, colliers, and other workmen, in that and the neighbouring counties.—Let every man who reads it decide, whether strong restrictive *laws* are not necessary to keep the factious societies in awe, and to preserve the peace of the country.

“ At a meeting of delegates from a number of towns in the counties of Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester, held at Ilkstone on Monday the 26th of December, 1796, one of the delegates from the Nottingham Corresponding Society, addressed the meeting nearly as follows.

“ Friends and fellow citizens,

“ I feel my mind deeply impressed with a confident assurance that I need not make any apology for thus addressing you, and at the same time, I am conscious that I am not worthy the honour, nor equal to the task conferred upon me ; I cannot call in the aid of ability, but hope I shall endeavour to compensate for its loss, by a disinterested zeal for the public good ; to raise the poor from slavery—and to secure the enjoyment of honest-earned property, to the rich, would be our greatest pleasure. *Peace and reform* (I believe) is our grand, our ultimate object. War and bloodshed we utterly abhor, and it is a great consolation to the friends of liberty that they have not dyed their souls with the guilt, nor embrued their hands in the blood, of their neighbours, nor reduced their country to the dreadful alternative of invasion. Hope of peace is no more,—but we may expect to be immediately called upon, to sheath the sword of despotism in the vitals of our fellow mortals, to leave our wives to mourn and our children to perish,—one part of the poor to be sacrificed for the safety of the great—and the other to feed their extravagance : they pay no taxes, for they have raised their rents, and not only that, but they are in the habit of receiving large pen-

scruple to persist in his dangerous attempts to effect their repeal; and thereby to give a loose to

that

"sions (wrung from the vitals of the poor) in proportion to their  
 "ability, to rob and enslave them. For has not one of the grand  
 "cabal, the thundering dæmon of war confirmed this opinion,  
 "when he says, 'Perish commerce, but let our constitution live?'  
 "Perish manufacturers and mechanics; for our foreign commerce,  
 "being nearly lost by war, we have the consolation to be told by  
 "the exalted Pittachio, that our trade will find its own level, and  
 "to the teeth of the swinish, the slavish multitude we pronounce  
 "it, our places and pensions we will enjoy, for have we not a ser-  
 "vile army on the one hand, and an armed aristocracy on the other?  
 "we have the representative part of government under our thumbs,  
 "and the executive in our hands: the administration of our laws  
 "we have put into the hands of clergy, who instead of preaching  
 "the gospel of peace and redemption, thunder out damnation on  
 "the enemies of war and corruption, and as such we are stigma-  
 "tized as disloyal to church and state. Thus we are doomed to po-  
 "verty and death by one, and anathematized to hell by the other.  
 "But we are friends to peace and good order, we are loyal to the  
 "true interest and happiness of our country, we are anxious for  
 "liberty, and as friends and fellow citizens I hope we consider  
 "ourselves as met on an equal footing, equally open to commu-  
 "nicate, and equally ready to receive instructions, and I hope we  
 "seek not our own but each others good. The stubborn impolicy  
 "of a corrupt administration has reduced the nation, either to real  
 "or fictitious apprehensions—we may reasonably expect that the lives  
 "and fortune men do still retain their zealous loyalty to their glo-  
 "rious cause, and we will do them the honour not to believe, that  
 "they will excuse themselves in the hour of danger, by paying  
 "the paltry sum of fifteen pounds, but stand forward manfully in  
 "defence of their own lives and property, and suffer the friends  
 "of peace and reform to live in love and unity with all men.

"After which the following resolutions were unanimously agreed  
 to, viz.

"I. That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the militia aug-  
 "mentation bill, is calculated to destroy the British constitution,  
 "and the liberty of the people.

"II. That

that spirit, which, even checked and controuled as it is, must prove a source of anxiety and apprehension to every reflecting mind.—Such is the object of your idolatry!

“ II. That when Ministers of the crown have power given them by parliament, to drag the subjects from their nearest and dearest connections, and force them to become men of blood; we are of opinion that our property and persons, and even our lives are at their disposal.

“ III. It is the opinion of this meeting, that the unequal representation of the people in parliament, is the primary cause of the unparalleled powers of the present Ministers; and leaves the poor man who is not worth fifteen pounds unprotected by the constitution.

“ IV. It is the opinion of this meeting, that all men who are obliged to pay taxes, have a right to be represented in that parliament which lays the taxes upon them.

“ V. That it is the opinion of this meeting that, that part of the people who are not represented in parliament, have not any right to be compelled to leave their families, to fight for the preservation of that constitution wherein they have no voice.

“ VI. That we will use every legal and constitutional measure in our power, to procure annual parliaments and universal suffrage.

“ VII. That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the men of great landed property pay no taxes, for by raising their rents they shift the evil from themselves to the farmers, and the farmers by doubling the price of provisions lay it (with great interest) entirely upon the poor, whose labour is the wealth and support of the nation.

“ *Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this meeting, that there is no hope of saving the poor from perishing, nor of preventing the rich from involving the whole nation in destruction; but by a general union of the people, whose united voice would roar more like Thunder than cannon, and the vivid flashes of complaint, remonstrance and indignation, would awe their guilty souls into peace, and make them relinquish their favorite system of Murder, Oppression, and Death.”

Whether



Whether I consider the conduct of your party as it relates to France, or merely as it refers to our domestic polity, I find equal subject for animadversion and censure. You maintain the policy, in the event of a peace, of living in close friendship with France; and all the efforts of opposition have been calculated to impress the same *pernicious* idea. Whenever we make a treaty with the French, the known honour and integrity of the nation will be a sure pledge for its full and faithful observance; but, I trust, that the vigilance and wisdom of the legislature will be actively exerted for the prevention of a too close intercourse with that *infected* country, and to obstruct that copious influx of Frenchmen into Great Britain, which will certainly be attempted, *from the most hostile motives*, as soon as the war shall be terminated.

This new attachment to France, so repugnant to the honest prejudices of our ancestors, and conceived at a time when she has become, from her treachery and crimes, an object of execration to all the virtuous part of mankind, is liable to suspicions of a peculiar nature. It is even expressly contradictory to the avowed principles and recorded sentiments of your party itself, as a reference to those documents which I have before had occasion to quote, will irrefragably prove. In the month of February, 1787, when nothing more was proposed than to conclude a commercial treaty with France, highly favourable, in its provisions,

provisions, to our trade and manufactures, the scheme was reprobated by the opposition; and Mr. Fox himself endeavoured, by every argument his ingenuity could devise or his eloquence enforce, to confirm that rooted enmity which England had for ages maintained against her formidable rival. He declared, "that he never  
 " could be brought to believe that France could be  
 " sincere in her professions of friendship to Great  
 " Britain." He remarked, "that, notwithstanding the levity of French manners, notwithstanding the mutability of that people, yet, to the astonishment of the whole world, during  
 " all the changes of administration, they had, for  
 " more than a century, kept to one regular and  
 " constant idea, that of overweening pride and  
 " *national aggrandizement*: anxious to grasp at a  
 " more than due influence over the other powers of  
 " Europe, France had endeavoured, by different  
 " means, to obtain her object." He represented  
 " the true situation of England to be that of a  
 " great maritime power, looked up to by the other  
 " powers of Europe as that to which *the distressed*  
 " *should fly for assistance, whenever France unjustly*  
 " *attacked them*, with a view to the attainment of  
 " her favourite object." In reply to Mr. PITT's remarks on the treaty, he said, "With regard  
 " to what the Right Honourable Gentleman had  
 " observed respecting its political tendency, to  
 " cement in bonds of peace and commerce the  
 " friendship of both countries, and that he conceived it not impossible by these means to de-  
 " stroy

“froy that enmity which had subsisted between  
 “the two nations, he must beg entirely to dissent.  
 “*France was the inveterate and UNALTERABLE*  
 “political enemy of Great Britain.” He main-  
 tained, “that a wise Minister ought, with re-  
 spect to France, to procure an alliance for  
 “Great Britain with some maritime power that  
 “could assist her whenever France thought it a  
 “fit moment to attack her.” He declared, “he  
 “had lately heard, and with much true joy, that  
 “the probability of our once again recovering  
 “our situation with *Holland*, was encreased—he  
 “was sincerely glad of it.”—Such was the lan-  
 guage of your oracle!

Mr. GREY, too, supported the same principles  
 and maintained the same doctrine; he reprobated  
 “*the boundless ambition of France*, our natural, ri-  
 val, if not our natural foe;” and he “asked  
 “what had lulled *our constitutional jealousy* to  
 “sleep; and whether it evinced either policy or  
 “prudence in Great Britain to abandon *her old*  
 “*prejudices* and assume a *new feeling* towards  
 “France?”—He was convinced—“that while  
 “France was holding out the most liberal profes-  
 “sions of amity and sincere regard towards this  
 “country, she was intent on the pursuit of her  
 “grand object, *the annihilation of the greatness of*  
 “*Britain in the scale of Europe, the reduction of her*  
 “*power, and the ruin of her navigation and marine.*”  
 And he declared that “it had been the uniform  
 “aim of France to diminish British greatness,  
 “and



“and to render us as much politically insulated  
 “as we were insulated in regard to our local situa-  
 “tion.”—This was *British* language and these  
 were *British* principles, though certainly misap-  
 plied to the conduct of the French in 1787.  
 But what a contrast do they form with the lan-  
 guage employed and the principles advanced by  
 your party, since the French revolution ! Whence  
 does this change proceed ? Has France *then* so  
 ambitious, *now* become so moderate, when she  
 only requires the Alps and the Rhine as the boun-  
 daries of her territory ? Has France *then* so con-  
 taminated, *now* become so purified by the blood of  
 her best citizens shed on the scaffold, or in the  
 field of civil contest ? Has France *then* so vicious,  
*now* become so virtuous by the abolition of mo-  
 narchy and the establishment of a republic ?  
 Has France who *then* deserved our enmity, *now*  
 rendered herself worthy our friendship by extend-  
 ing the object of her hostility from our power to  
 our constitution ? In short, what is there in her  
 present situation, that can justify the abandonment  
 of those *old prejudices* and the assumption of that  
*new feeling*, the former of which your party so  
 strongly justified, and the latter of which they so  
 loudly reprobated, ten years ago ? Since that period  
 she has committed every act of atrociousness of  
 which human depravity was believed to be capable,  
 and many of which it was supposed to be incapa-  
 ble : she has murdered her own sons ; oppressed  
 her friends ; robbed her Allies ; invaded the rights  
 of neutral States ; and trampled upon all laws,

social, moral, and divine. You will certainly acknowledge that *such* incitements to a friendly intercourse, required an explanation, although you have prudently forborne to give one.

You say that you are no advocate for popular excesses, and as *I believe your private character to be irreproachable*, I give full credit to your assertion; but it becomes you to consider whether the language you use is not calculated to excite them, and whether those with whom you act are as sincere in their professions as yourself. I must confess, that I place little faith in the boasted moderation of modern reformers; and experience has taught me to view their affirmations with doubt and suspicion. I have not yet forgotten that, in July 1791, one of the French reformers, the notorious *Abbé Sieyès*, who has since taken an active, though a *secret*, part in all the enormities that have been committed since that period, made the following declaration: "I prefer a monarchy to a republic, because it is proved that a citizen enjoys more liberty in a monarchy than in a republic.—In every point of view a man is more free in a monarchy than in a republic." Neither have I forgotten the declaration of *Lord Lauderdale's* honest friend *BRISOT*, in the National Assembly, only fourteen days before the execution of his plot for the abolition of monarchy, on the 10th of August 1792, "They tell us of a faction that wishes to establish a republic. If any such regicide republicans exist, if there are men who seek

“seek to establish a republic, the sword of the law ought to fall upon their heads as upon those of the active friends of two chambers.” Besides, whatever may be the *intentions* of men, who endeavour to enlist the populace on their side, they ought to recollect, when engaged in such an hazardous enterprize, that it is much easier to *raise* the storm of public discontent, than to *direct* it.

The present moment is truly critical, and the contest in which we are engaged requires the active unanimity of all classes and descriptions of men. But this unanimity is not to be promoted by the inflammatory language which you have chosen to employ. Your remarks with regard to Ireland, I shall pass unnoticed; I have read with satisfaction the speeches of Sir HERCULES LANGRISHE, and would advise you to take from that worthy Baronet a lesson of true patriotism. Any blockhead may inflame the passions of a mob; but it requires some talents to convince the judgement of rational men.—To this description of persons alone I appeal for the justice of my assertion, that your language is calculated to produce the very consequences which you seem to deprecate.

Speaking of the revolutions of America and France, you assert in direct opposition to fact, that the destruction of both Governments was owing

7 “Conspiracy D’Orleans,” Tom. III. p. 135, 136, 204.



to the refusal of corrupt power "to submit to correction;" they are now, you say, both representative republics, "and," *mark the threat!* "if corruption will not yet be corrected, let her look to herself."<sup>8</sup> That is as much as to say, that if the British legislature will not adopt those plans of reform, which your party and the society of "The Friends of the People" in their wisdom think necessary, the monarchy will be destroyed and a republic established on its ruins. I trust, however, that there are *real* staunch Friends of the Constitution enough yet remaining, who hold such threats in utter contempt, and will have courage to make those, who shall dare attempt to put them in execution, rue their temerity. The time, thank Heaven, is not yet come for rebellion to stalk bare-faced and unpunished through the streets of London.

You afterwards tell us that the taxes, which have been imposed for the necessary purpose of self-defence, was occasioned by corruptions,<sup>9</sup> and pursuing your favourite theme, you observe, that "corruption brutifies and debases; her votaries are stupidly insensible, and, as this contagion must, in the nature of things, stop short of the great mass of the people, *the multitude separated from their superiors* are of course *the indignant reformers*; and the lazy, profligate, bloated abusers of rational and useful eminence are

<sup>8</sup> Page 6.<sup>9</sup> Page 126.

“knocked on the head like seals whom the tide  
 “has left sleeping on the shore.”<sup>1</sup> If this *elegant*  
 and *delicate* observation have not a direct tendency  
 to create a distinction between the different classes  
 of society, which is alike foreign from the princi-  
 ples and *practice* of our constitution, and, far-  
 ther, to excite discontent and revolt, I am not  
 able to comprehend its meaning.

Speaking of the example afforded by the French  
 revolution, you remark—“It may serve as a  
 “warning to the inhabitants of all nations not  
 “*suddenly* to push forward the reformatations of  
 “society beyond the pitch of prudence and the  
 “analogies of experience; to consider Govern-  
 “ment as a practical thing, rather to build upon  
 “the foundations laid by the united wisdom of  
 “social man, improving upon the model *by the*  
 “*rising lights of the world*, than to assume, at  
 “once, the exercise and practice of their full  
 “rights, *merely because the rights unquestionably*  
 “*belong to them.*”<sup>2</sup> It is sufficiently evident what  
 rights they are to which you allude, by your ex-  
 hortation in the following page, in which you call  
 upon the people “to come forward at this mo-  
 “ment,” with a firmness which reminds Govern-  
 ment “*that it exists only for their benefit, and by*  
 “*their consent.*”<sup>3</sup> No language can be plainer:  
 you tell the people, in direct terms, that they  
 have an unquestionable right to destroy the Go-

<sup>1</sup> Page 131.<sup>2</sup> Page 186.<sup>3</sup> Page 137.

vernment whenever they please, because you say it exists only by their consent ; but that it is not expedient to put those rights in practice *suddenly* and *at once* ! In the first place, you assume a fact which you are incompetent to prove, for your ideas of the origin of Government are extremely erroneous ; and, secondly, you point to an inference which you are unable to justify. But admitting the justice both of your premises and your conclusions, let me ask, Whether this be proper language to use at such a period as the present ? Faction, I know, will seek to inflame where wisdom will strive to conciliate ; but, surely, the man who assumes the character of a patriot should, at a time when an unprincipled enemy seeks to impose terms of pacification incompatible with the safety and honour of his country, invoke the unanimous aid of his fellow-citizens to resist such dangerous pretensions, instead of calling upon them to come forward in support of that very system which must, if adopted, enforce a compliance with their enemy's demands. He should also, when the right of resistance and insurrection has been openly preached by the modern apostles of liberty, forbear to encrease the stock of *imaginary* rights, and teach his countrymen, *if he know it himself*, the true origin of their *real* rights, which can only result from the discharge of their *duties*.<sup>4</sup> And he should not favour the vulgar and preposterous

<sup>4</sup> You appear to me to be as ignorant of the origin of *right* as of the origin of Government. I have already directed your attention



preposterous idea, that corruptions are, exclusively, the fruit of monarchical establishments, when they are known to subsist in a much greater degree under republican and democratic Governments.

“ No sooner,” says MALLET DU PAN, “ was  
 “ the throne of France overthrown, than theft  
 “ usurped its place. Regular boards of corrup-  
 “ tion were established; tributes of blood ex-  
 “ torted tributes of money; and if the citizen  
 “ escaped the rapacity of Government, he could  
 “ not escape the rapine of his accomplices. The  
 “ ferocity of the French republic has been re-  
 “ marked; but nobody has observed that that  
 “ ferocity was mercenary, and a matter of calcula-  
 “ tion; still less has any one yet dared to state,  
 “ that it was a condition vigorously insisted upon  
 “ at the establishment of a great democratic re-  
 “ public at the end of the eighteenth century !”

Sorry am I to say, that, in whatever point of view I consider the conduct of opposition, whe-

tion to a pure source of information on the latter subject, and I now refer you for instruction on the former, to “ *The Origin of Duty and Right in Man considered* ;” a work which contains more sound and useful constitutional knowledge than is to be found in the political writings of LOCKE and all his supporters, on this important topic. The author has displayed a *truly philosophic* mind, actuated by the best principles and directed to the best end—the well-being of man.

<sup>5</sup> *Correspondence Politique, pour servir à L'Histoire du Republicanisme Français.*

ther

than as directed to secure impunity to the promoters of internal tumult, or to prevent the Government from affording that assistance to our Ally which can alone enable him successfully to oppose the exertions of our common foe, it appears to me to be precisely such as men, under the direct influence of the Executive Directory of France, would be taught to pursue. Narrow, contracted, and unprincipled, must those minds be, which, at this awful conjuncture, can act as if engaged in a contest for place and power; and which, instead of proceeding upon the broad ground of constitutional vigilance, can descend to political squabbles, contentions, and broils; dishonourable to themselves, and disgraceful to the Senate. If, by such conduct, we should be ultimately driven, which Heaven forbid! to purchase, by a base sacrifice of our honour and our safety, a short respite from hostility, the heavy load of responsibility will crush them with its weight, and the maledictions of society will proclaim them the enemies of their country.—Firmness, vigour, and decision have heretofore formed the characteristic features of Britons in the hour of distress. Though the *public mind* is, I fear, in some degree, perverted, the national character, I trust, is not gone; let us be true to ourselves and we have nothing to fear; but the man who, when difficulties press and dangers surround, refuses to lend his support to the State, is a miscreant, that deserves to be rejected from her bosom.

Such,

Such, Sir, are the honest sentiments of a mind, independent as your own, and more unshackled, because linked to no *party*.

In the course of these strictures, I have exercised that freedom of discussion which an earnest desire to serve, exclusively, the cause of *truth*, will ever lead me to assert.—While I do justice to those talents which have secured you distinction in the line of your profession, and acknowledge, with pleasure, the excellence of your private character, I cannot but deplore your ignorance on political matters, and reprobate the tendency of your public conduct. If, in doing this, I have sometimes employed strong language, it should be remembered that the occasion justifies its strength.<sup>6</sup> I have neither the art nor the inclina-

<sup>6</sup> You have expressed your apprehension that the promulgation of your sentiments on the war, would expose you to the attacks of *calumny*. This is one of the expressions which your party have been accustomed to apply to all the attacks of their opponents, however just or well founded. But as the word, in its legitimate meaning, is only applicable to a *false* charge, a *groundless* accusation, it cannot be applied to the language of *truth*, however harsh or severe. For example, you have called the Emperor of Germany a *conspirator* for having waged war against France; I accuse you, in reply, of *ignorance* and *misrepresentation*;—but you adduce no proof in support of your charge, and I demonstrate its falsehood: you therefore are the *calumniator*; I the advocate of *truth*.—This is a distinction which it is much to be wished that all political writers would keep constantly in view.

If you wish for any farther practical illustration of *calumny*, I refer you to the speeches of your associates in the House of Commons, previous to the dissolution of the *last* Parliament.



tion to modify terms of reprobation, or to soften down expressions of censure, so as to give them the semblance of praise.—In short, I prefer the honest bluntness of BOILEAU to the vain varnish of ERSKINE—

“ J'appelle un chat un chat et Rolet un fripon.”

Dignity and decorum do not preclude severity and rigour—

“ The base degenerate age requires

“ Severity and justice in its rigour.”

and affectation and hypocrisy, which the refinement of modern philosophy has dignified with the equivocal appellations of *liberality* and *moderation*, are not the weapons of TRUTH.

You have, very MODESTLY, confessed that you have no talents for a statesman; and your “ View of the Causes and Consequences of the War,” affords an incontrovertible proof of the justice of your acknowledgement.—A firm determination to suffer no imposition to be practised upon the public, on a point of such extreme importance to the nation, and a wish to display the conduct of your party in a proper point of view, led me to submit, in a state of health but ill-calculated for mental exertion of any kind, to the trouble of perusing your tract and exposing its defects;—To use your own language—“ These considerations in-

“ duced

“ duced me to travel through one of the most  
 “ dull, despicable, and miserable performances,  
 “ that ever I had been doomed to read.”

<sup>7</sup> See the debates, in the House of Commons, on the 26th of November, 1795, on the subject of the pamphlet ascribed to Mr. REEVES. On that occasion, Mr. Fox observed, that he should not act up to the feelings of a *gentleman* if he did not hold in reprobation the character of Mr. REEVES. I do not mean to insult Mr. REEVES, either by comparing his character with that of the author of this observation; or the production imputed to him with the object of these strictures; but I cannot forbear to notice the peculiar structure of those feelings of a *gentleman*, which prompts him to attack the character of another in a place where he has no means of defence.

FINIS.

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November, 1795, on the subject of the pamphlet ascribed to Mr.  
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